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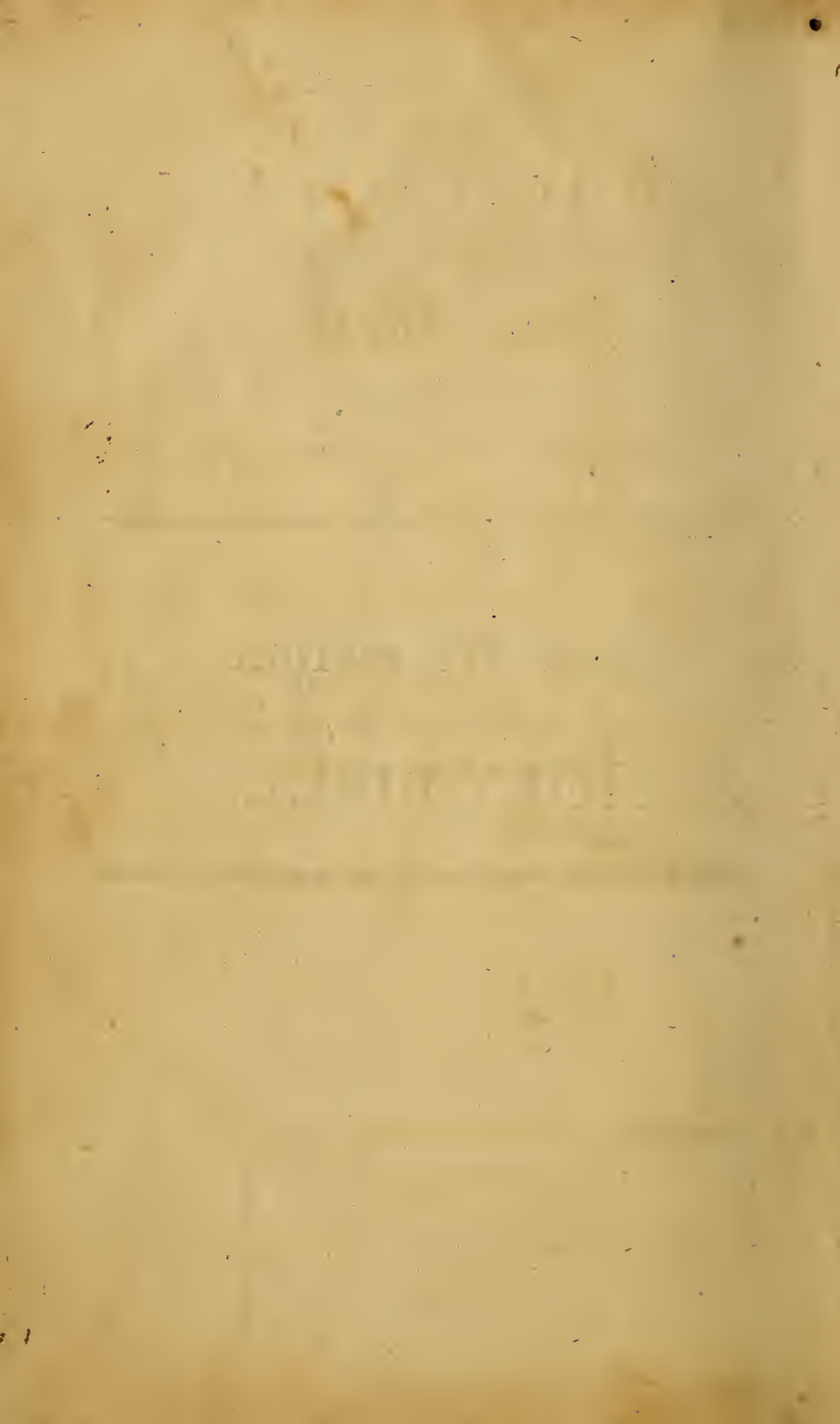


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A  
COMPLETE HISTORY  
OF THE  
HOLY BIBLE.

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A  
COMPLETE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
**Holy Bible,**

AS CONTAINED IN THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS,

INCLUDING ALSO THE OCCURRENCES OF FOUR HUNDRED YEARS,  
FROM THE LAST OF THE PROPHETS TO THE BIRTH OF CHRIST,

AND

THE LIFE OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR AND HIS APOSTLES, &c.

WITH

COPIOUS NOTES,

CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY, PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL.

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From the text of the Rev. LAURENCE HOWEL, A. M. with considerable  
ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS,

*By the Rev. GEORGE BURDER,*

Author of Village Sermons, &c.

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THREE VOLUMES IN TWO,

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VOLUME I.

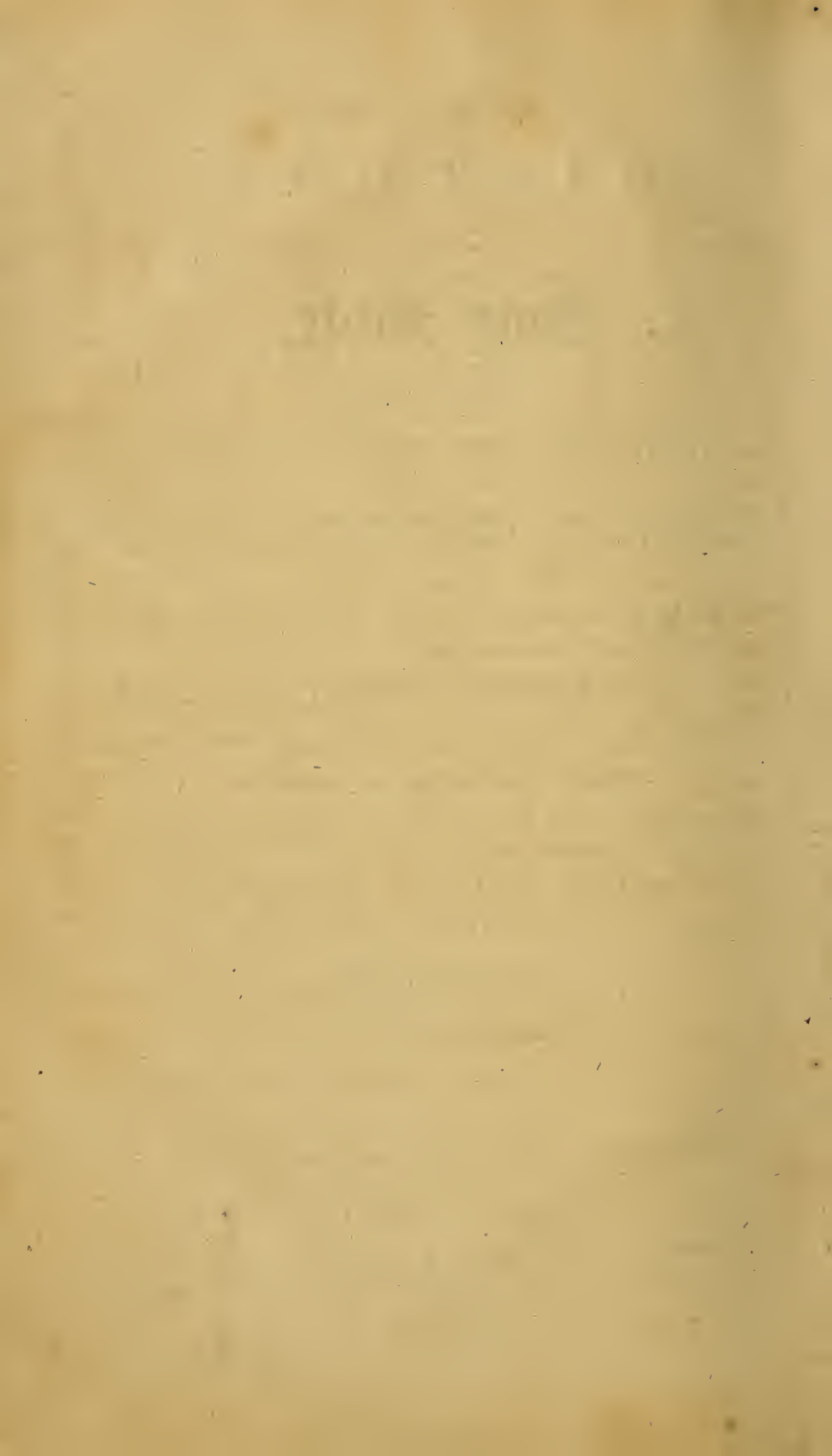
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Philadelphia :

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October, 1807.

*Presented to the General Assembly's Theological Seminary  
by  
Mrs Hannah Lopez of Highmings*



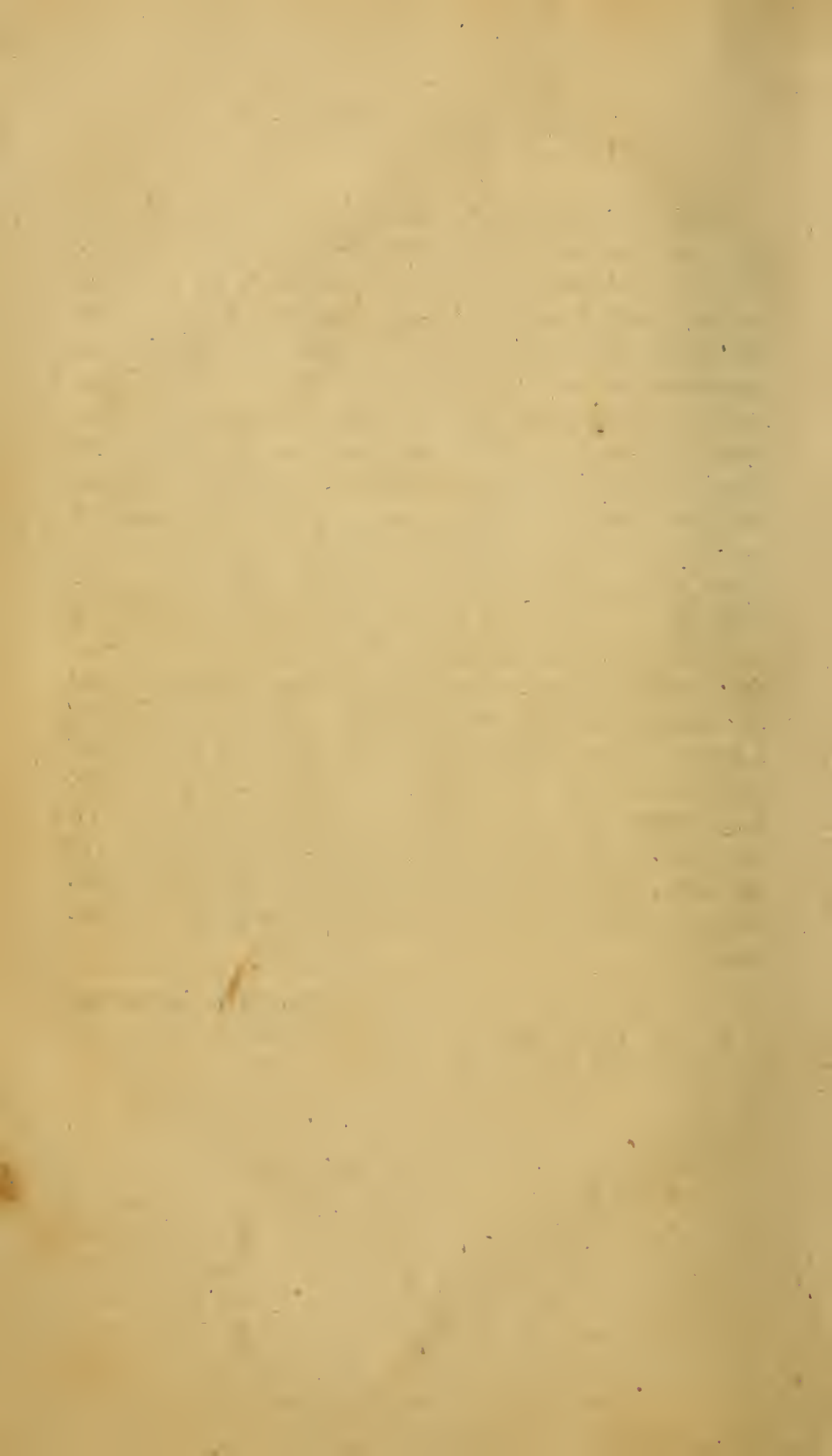


## ADVERTISEMENT.

*THE HISTORY of the BIBLE, by the Rev. Mr. Howel, being much esteemed, and having become very scarce, I was desired by the publishers of this edition to prepare it for the press: in doing which I found much more labour than I expected; for Mr. Howel's style was frequently negligent, and required some improvement to render it agreeable to modern and intelligent readers. Many events, recorded both in the Old and New Testament, appeared to me to have been passed over too slightly. To his account of these I have made considerable additions; and have sometimes ventured to intermingle a few practical reflections. I have also endeavoured to throw that light upon some of the obscurer passages of the Old Testament with which we are furnished by the New. The History of our Saviour's sufferings, death, and resurrection, is much enlarged, for which I am indebted chiefly to those excellent writers, Doctors Doddridge and Macknight; from whom, as well as from several other able critics, I have borrowed many an explanatory note, which I trust have contributed greatly to enrich the Work: and throughout the whole, I have laboured to render the history uniformly evangelical. In a word—If Mr. Howell's original work deserved the approbation of the public, I hope this improved edition will be still more acceptable, and be found generally useful to Christians of all denominations.*

GEORGE BURDER.

London, Jan. 1, 1807.





THE

AUTHOR'S

P R E F A C E

ABRIDGED.

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THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, on account of their antiquity, dignity, and other excellencies, far exceeding all the writings of the ancients, it may be proper, before we commence our Biblical History, to make a few remarks upon them. Indeed, if we consider how many centuries have passed since they were compiled, and how miraculously they have been preserved to the present times, they plainly appear to have been the peculiar care of God. We ought also to prize the Scriptures, as comprising every species of knowledge that is useful and entertaining. Would we know whence natural philosophy, with astronomy and other appendages on it derive their origin? Examine the books of Genesis, Job, and Ecclesiastes. What writings abound more in ethics or moral precepts, than the sacred and sententious Proverbs? What more certain, regular or pleasing History can we find, than in Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, and Judges. How free from sophistry are the Holy Scriptures, and how solid are all the arguments used in them? Geometry is displayed in the building of the tabernacle; and the working in metals and wood was known long before the building of Solomon's temple. In short, all manner of Learning, Arts, and Sciences, are comprehended within those sacred pages. They are so exactly disposed, that they are a magazine accommodated to all places, times and persons; so that St. Basil justly calls them a Pharmacopeia furnished with medicines for all uses and necessities. From hence, in time of persecution, the martyrs derived con-

stancy and courage. From hence, in times of peace and religion, the learned acquired wisdom and eloquence. In times of heresy, they furnished the orthodox with stability in the faith, and assisted them in the subversion of error. From hence, in prosperity, we learn humility and modesty; in adversity, magnanimity and patience. In danger it arms us with an honest zeal; and, finally, if abuses insinuate themselves into discipline, and corrupt our morals, nothing but the rule of God's word can restore religion to its pristine state and dignity; for that alone is the standard of our thoughts, and guide of our actions.

But we need no other recommendation of these sacred writings, than that of our blessed Saviour, who hath commanded us to "search the Scriptures." And in obedience to his precept, the apostles and fathers of the church made it their great concern to exhort all men to the study of them. The Old Testament is indeed a system of every kind of knowledge useful for the conduct of human life; and from which the philosophers and legislators of all ages drew the best of their observations; and the authors of both canon and civil law have from thence derived their most useful institutions.

But the excellency of Sacred History will more evidently appear, if we compare it with the accounts of the best and most ancient heathen writers. How obscure and trifling are their stories of Deucalion's flood, of Prometheus and Hercules, and their general notions of the existence of the world from eternity! In short, all profane story is filled with obscurity and fables before the Olympiads, which was their first certain æra, and which did not commence till many centuries after the time of Moses; so that from the first three thousand years of the world, we have no certain history to depend upon, but that of Moses. And, indeed, if we pay our just deference to it, we shall find it the best guide in the transactions life. There only we have the true account of the rise and fall of the most early kingdoms of the world; and by their example, either in prosperity or adversity, learn to be wise and happy. If we compare the Greek and Roman historians with the Sacred History, we shall find the latter to abound with the more illustrious exemplars of heroic virtue. Rome may boast of her Torquatus and Brutus, who, in a more

brutal than generous bravery, sacrificed their sons to the public good: but who would not rather admire the obedience of pious Abraham, who had devoted his beloved Isaac a victim to the will of God? Historians and poets may applaud the courage of the Horatii and others, who in defence of their country slew their enemies in single combat: but how short do they come of the heroic David, who, though but a stripling, encountered and slew the gigantic Goliath, and by his death, procured an easy victory over the Philistines? Alexander's virtue is worthy of praise, who when he had conquered Darius, would not allow himself the pleasure of surveying his beautiful captives, lest he should be tempted to desire: but what is this to the continence of Joseph, who fled from the actual solicitations of his lascivious mistress into a loathsome dungeon. They may talk of the fortitude and success of their warlike heroes, their Cæsar, Pompey, Scipio, Hannibal, and Alexander; but how much more illustrious are the examples of Moses, Joshua, Samson, Gideon, David and Saul? who inspired with more than human courage, with a handful of men, trampled on their numerous enemies; and to facilitate whose conquests the very elements conspired, and fought on their side.

I. But besides these general advantages of the Old Testament, there are some more peculiar to it; the first of which is, that the New Testament cannot be understood without it. The apostles often cite it, and more frequently allude to it; and our blessed Lord taking his leave of his disciples, says, "These are the words which I spake unto you, whilst I was still with you; that all must be fulfilled, which was written of me in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms," Luke xxiv. 44.

II. Christ being the end of the law, many things which are spoken of in the Old Testament, relate to Christ and his servants, as well in a literal as an allegorical sense: "Our Fathers," saith St. Paul, "were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptised unto Moses, and in that cloud, and that sea; and did all eat the same spiritual food, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. Now



all these things were types unto them, and were written to admonish us, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

III. Another great advantage is, that the Old Testament is a magazine furnished, with a variety of figures, examples, doctrines and sententious oracles, not only relating to faith, but to a good life, that from thence we may furnish ourselves with directions on all occasions. Thus our blessed Lord, by the example of Noah, and Lot's wife, stirs up the slothful to watchfulness, Luke xvii. 27, 32. He threatens the obstinate Jews, by the remembrance of Sodom and Nineveh, and the queen of the South; and terrifies the uncharitable rich with the words of Abraham to Dives in hell; "They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them, Luke xvi. 29." St. Paul, as hath been before observed, says, "all these things were done to them for examples to us, that we should avoid those judgments God had afflicted them with for their fornication, idolatry, murmuring, &c."

IV. The last advantage I shall mention is, that as the Old Testament had the honour to precede the New, so it gave witness to it as St. John Baptist did to Christ; both he, Moses, and the prophets going before him to prepare the way, "to give knowledge of salvation to his people, to give light to them that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace." In confirmation of which, Moses and Elias appeared at the transfiguration of Christ on the Mount, bearing witness of him, and speaking of his departure, Luke ix. 31. Indeed, so great is the force of the gospel-truths, that comparing the transactions of our Saviour's life, with what was foretold of them, none can doubt of the completion of those predictions in him only. But none go so far in the eulogies of Moses and the law, as our blessed Lord himself. "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses; had ye believed on him, ye would have believed on me; for he wrote of me: but if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words, John v. 45, 46. Certainly as Tertullian observes, the harmony between the two Testaments, the agreement between Moses and Christ, the prophets and the apostles, the synagogue and the church, must needs be a great testimony of the truth of Christ and his gospel.

Having said thus much of those incomparable histories and other excellent things contained in the Old Testament, it may not be improper to say something of the writers or compilers of them. And first of Moses.

And here, considering the dignity of that great and excellent legislator, to whom God did the honour of speaking face to face, it may seem almost a presumption to attempt his character. I shall only say, that for some thousands of years, the sun did not behold his equal. He was from his infancy brought up in a court, where he received all the advantages of a royal education. He was skilled in Egyptian learning, conversing at court till he was forty years old: at which time being divinely inspired, he withdrew from the court of Pharaoh, and, disdainig to be thought the son of Pharaoh's daughter, chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of a sinful life. Being obliged to flee to Midian, he undertook the humble employment of feeding sheep. In which time God appeared to him in the bush, and gave him a commission to be ruler and leader of his people.

But if we enquire more particularly into the character of this excellent person, we shall find him the most honoured mortal that ever was born, till the Son of God appeared to bless the form in human shape. He was prophet, prince, and poet. For the first we have his own acknowledgment: "The Lord thy God shall raise up unto thee a prophet like unto me, from among thy brethren, Deut. xviii. 15." For the second, God himself invested him with royal power, when he gave him a commission to deliver and govern his people, Exod. iii. 10. That he was a poet, appears from those eleven Psalms ascribed to him, from Psalm lxxxix. to Psalm c. Besides the many personal favours God bestowed upon this great man, he was pleased to honour him with this commendation, that he was the most faithful of his servants, to whom he would communicate his will by express words, Numb. xii. 7, 8. And indeed, if we consider the frequent interviews between God and Moses, the conveyance of the law by him, and his daily pleading for the people in the tabernacle, where God more immediately relieved himself, we

may justly call him the secretary of the divine wisdom. I shall not need to advance his character by enumerating his wonderful works in Egypt: his miraculous conduct of the Israelites through the Red Sea; his furnishing them with food from heaven: his producing water by a miracle; and his vindicating God's honor and his own reputation from the calumnies of their enemies by a just execution on Korah and his associates. Whoever examines his administration, will find in it the most refined polity and most exact economy that ever adorned the character of the most illustrious legislator; for he had to do with a most obstinate, rebellious people, and whom he governed with such dexterity, that he always brought them to a sense of their duty. Nor was his humility the least embellishment of his character; for though the Israelites had often provoked him by their reproaches, and apostacy, and sometimes threatened to stone him; unmoved he beheld their ingratitude, and instead of revenging himself by threats and punishments, he humbly addressed himself to God in their behalf, to deprecate the judgments they deserved. And for this virtue God himself expressly distinguishes him with this eulogy, "That he was the meekest man upon earth."

As to the other writers of the Old Testament, little need be said; besides, confining myself chiefly to the historical part of it, I shall be the more brief, giving an account only of those books of the Scripture, from whence the history is collected.

The first catalogue of sacred books, was made by the Jews, but by whom is not certainly known. It is highly probable, it was by Ezra, who collected all the sacred books of the Old Testament, and shewing the collection to the Jews, it was received and approved by the whole nation.

The five books written by Moses, contain the history of near three thousand years, from the creation till his death. The prophets who succeeded him, wrote in thirteen books, all that happened from his death to the reign of Artaxerxes.

It is not certain whether Joshua wrote the book that goes by his name; but it is very probable it was written by his command, and soon after his death; for Moses had often, during his administration, ordered him to write the most remarkable occurrences in a book. It contained a history of about seventeen years.



Some are of opinion, that every judge wrote what was transacted in his days; and that all these transactions were collected either by Samuel or Ezra. The book of Judges contains the history of three hundred years and upwards, from the death of Joshua to the death of Samson. As for the story of Ruth, it is certain she lived in the time of the judges, probably under Shamgar.

The four books that follow, contain the history of near six hundred years. The first book of Samuel to the twenty-fifth chapter, was written by Samuel himself; the prophets Gad and Nathan finished it, and wrote the second book of Samuel. The two books of Kings were written by Jeremiah or Ezra.

The two books of Chronicles were written after the four former. It is generally believed they were composed by Ezra, who collected them partly out of the other books of the Bible, and partly out of the papers which were yet extant in his days, but since lost.

Ezra wrote that book which is called by his name: and contains the history of eighty-two years, from the first year of Cyrus to the twentieth of Artaxerxes Longimanus.

The book of Nehemiah was certainly written by himself, and contains the history of about thirty-one years, from the reign of Artaxerxes to the beginning of the reign of Darius.

The time and author of the book of Esther are very uncertain. Some think it was written by Ezra, or Joachim the priest, the grandson of Jozedec.

As to the story of Job, some have questioned the truth of it; but Job being mentioned in Holy Writ with so much applause, it would be criminal to doubt it.\* The time in which he lived is difficult to be ascertained; as well as the author. Some say, it was written by himself, others by Moses. These are but conjectures. It is generally believed that Job lived before Moses, and that his afflictions befel him when the children of Israel were in the wilderness. Some are of opinion, that he was descended of Nahor, Abraham's brother; others from Esau, which last is most probable.

\* See Ezek. xiv. 14, James v. 11.

WITH respect to the following Work, it would be more amusing than beneficial to give the reader a catalogue of the helps I have made use of in this undertaking; let it suffice, that I have had recourse to the best interpreters, critics, and commentators.

Confining myself chiefly to what is historical, I have touched only on those passages in the prophets which relate to the history, that I might not break in upon, or discontinue the series of time and action.

I have inserted those historical passages of the Apocrypha, which the Jews esteemed true history, though they did not place them among their canonical books.

From the time of Malachi to our Saviour, there is a chasm of about four hundred years; which, to make the history complete, I have filled up out of the best authors that wrote of those times, as the reader will perceive; particularly the learned Prideaux, and occasionally Rollin.

With regard to the New Testament, I shall here only assign my reason for connecting the History of the four gospels in one story.

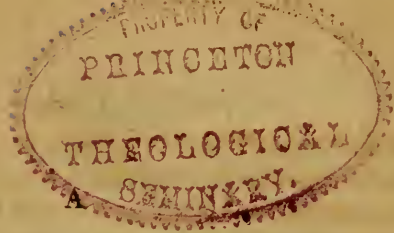
The God of truth, willing to acquaint us with what is of the highest concern, hath provided his Spirit to enlighten our understandings, and his written word to bring those things, which were done many ages ago, and in places far distant from us, so near, as if we had seen them acted before our eyes, Gal. iii. 1. To this end, our blessed Saviour chose from among the Jews certain men, which had known his life and doctrine from the beginning, Luke i. 2, to be witnesses to the Jews and Gentiles; and selected two from among his apostles, and two more from his disciples, to commit them to writing, and transmit them to posterity: that if in other cases the witness of two or three were sufficient; this of four might abundantly satisfy us; especially having received what they delivered, not only by their own knowledge and experience; but writing, as they spake, the dictates of the Spirit of God, 2 Pet. i. 21. The writings therefore of one of those, whom we call Evangelists, being the testimony of the Holy Ghost, 2 Tim. iii. 16, is of more value, and ought

rather to be credited, than the testimony of many, nay, of all men: but all of them agreeing in one and the same truth, their testimony is so much the more binding, as implying so many several acts of one and the same Spirit, producing in divers subjects one and the same effect; for though every one of them follow his own peculiar order in the context of his History, and sometimes deliver the same thing in different words, or add some circumstance to that which another had written, or new-matter altogether omitted by the rest, and now and then seem not so much to respect order and method, as faithfully to record facts; yet in the undoubted truth both of Christ's speeches and actions, there is a most admirable consent and harmony. For the more clear demonstration of this, the learned of all ages have bestowed much labour and industry in comparing their testimonies, by whose labours, the church of God hath been much enlightened and adorned. Yet this, being attempted by different writers, was performed in various ways. Some of them reduced all the four Evangelists into the method and text of one. Others placed the several texts collaterally in one page, leaving it to the reader to judge what was added; or otherwise delivered by any one of them. And this method most of latter times have followed, Calvin excepted, who harmonizeth only the three first, placing St. John by himself, as hardly reducible to the other three. Others have reduced all the four gospels into one continued text, bringing in every one in his due place and own words, delivering his part of the history of Christ. This method is observed by Jansenius and Chemnitius: but that which I have chiefly followed, is the *Itinerarium* of the incomparable Lucas Brugensis, before his most learned comment on the four gospels; which being so exactly performed, I thought it most proper for my rule and guide.

The advantage of this kind of harmony will be infinitely greater than I can express; for the reader will find by this perpetual and continued connexion of history, the speeches, sermons, and acts of Christ, related without interruption of circumstances differently placed. And where the circumstances of any actions are omitted by one or two of the Evangelists, they are in this method reduced to their proper place, and the history carried on entire. There are many places of the Evangelists, which seem to an

inadvertent or prejudiced reader to contradict one another; but by this connexion are more commodiously reconciled, than by any gloss whatsoever. And thus by the joint consent of the four gospels in one testimony and relation, the history of our blessed Lord and Saviour, and the whole foundation of evangelical truth and doctrine, appear more beautiful and illustrious: of which, may God give us his grace to make a right use and true improvement, for his glory and our benefit. Amen. Amen.





COMPLETE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE  
**Holy Bible.**

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BOOK THE FIRST.

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**T**HE Almighty Architect having created that mass of matter out of which the Universe was to be formed\*, “Commanded the light to shine out of darkness.” “God divided between the light and between the darkness : “And God called the light day, and the darkness he called “night;”† for hitherto nothing but darkness had overspread the unformed earth and water, which with the other materials of the creation lay blended together without

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\* Various opinions were entertained by the Heathen Philosophers concerning the origin of the world, and the nature of the element or elements of which they pretended particular bodies to have been formed. Some maintained that water was the principle of all things ; others gave that pre-eminence to the air, others to the fire, &c. but they all agreed in this, that the matter of the world was unproduced. They never disputed among themselves upon the question, whether any thing was made out of nothing ! They all agreed that it was impossible. Bayle’s Dict. under the word *Epicurus*. Indeed the Heathen Greeks had no correct notion of Creation, nor any proper word whereby to express it.

When it is said, Gen. i. 1, “God *created* the heavens and the earth,” the *substance*, not the *form*, is intended ; for after this, they were “without form and void.” v. 2.

† So Gen. i. 4, is translated by some of the learned, who suppose that the diurnal motion of the earth began at this time, by means of which motion, ever since continued, the airs that were in a state of darkness all the night, were enlightened in the morning ; and the airs that were enlightened all the day, grew darker in the evening. See Pike’s *Philosophia Sacra*.

order or distinction. The Spirit\* of God moved upon the face of the waters. No sooner had the light displayed its cheerful beams, than it gave birth to the first day, which was immediately succeeded by the first night.

And to keep this part of new-framed nature within proper limits, the Almighty made the Firmament,† which was designed to separate between “the waters which were under the expanse, and the waters which were above the expanse.” In consequence of which the waters were confined to certain bounds. The dry land then appeared, which was called Earth, as the gathering of the waters was called Sea. The earth being as yet unadorned, he gave the word, and it was immediately decorated with plants, and flowers, and trees, in all their beautiful variety.

Hitherto the light, which God created the first day, was diffused throughout the universe, by the struggling of the small globes of ethereal matter, to break loose from the centre of their vortexes; but on the fourth day God made those two great luminaries of heaven, the sun and moon, the one to rule the day and the other the night; and to render them more useful, by the regularity of their motion, he appointed them for signs to distinguish the seasons, and by them divide time into days and years. He made the stars also, which he set in the firmament, where they accomplish their revolutions in their appointed periods.

God having employed the first four days in the creation of inanimate things, proceeded to that of the living creatures:—“Let the waters bring forth abundantly the

\* *Spirit*. The Hebrew word thus translated, is used for the Spirit of God, and the spirit of a man too; but there is reason to think that the *material spirit* is here intended. It is the word used for the *Air*. Isa. xl. 7, “The spirit of the Lord bloweth on the grass of the field:” and Ps. 104. 30, “Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created,” &c. This does not exclude the agency of the Divine Spirit in the creation, but rather confirms it; for the material spirit is the type of the Holy Ghost in his various operations.

† *Firmament*. The Hebrew word signifies *Expansion*. Moses had mentioned the *spirit*, which is the grosser part of the heavens, and the *light* which is the finer part; these two are supposed to be in a continual conflict or commotion, by which an expansion is produced, and by this expansive force nature operates.

“moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of Heaven.” After this God created great whales, \* and all other living creatures which the waters produced, and gave them this blessing, “Be fruitful, and fill the waters with fish, and the earth with fowl.” Moreover he added to the fertility of the earth, which before brought forth only vegetables, the production of animals, saying, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind; cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kinds; and it was so.”

All these parts of the creation being thus finished in their admirable order, the Almighty, to crown this great work, changes his style, which before was, Let this, or that be so, and saith, “Let us make man in our own image, † after our own likeness:” He is not, like the other creatures, produced at an instant, but a sacred council is as it were held between the persons of the Holy Trinity, the result of which is a noble creature, who shall unite in his person both worlds; and though the matter out of which man was formed was but the dust of the ground, yet God

\* *Whales.* The Hebrew word *Tanim*, signifies large creatures, as well on earth, as in the water, and is commonly applied to large fishes.

† *Image.* Man was created with light in his understanding, and holiness in his will, which with all his affections and appetites, was subject to his enlightened understanding, and in this consisted the image of God; and to which fallen man must again be restored by the agency of the Holy Spirit. See Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24.

The expression “Let us make man,” certainly implies a plurality of persons in Jehovah; for there can be no imaginable reason why God should speak of himself in the plural number, unless he consists of more persons than one; which is further evident from Gen. iii. 22. It would be absurd to suppose, as some do, that God should borrow this way of speaking from that of human princes, before a man was created on the earth. It should also be noted that the word *Elohim*, translated God, is plural, and is frequently joined with plural verbs and plural adjectives; yet here, and in many other places, it is joined with a verb in the singular, and strongly implies a plurality of persons in one and the same Jehovah.

See this argument at large in “The Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity,” by the late learned W. Jones, M. A. F. R. S, Rector of Paston, and Minister of Nayland.

breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Man being thus excellently formed, was invested with the two great blessings of fruitfulness and dominion: "be fruitful," saith he "and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over it." He was constituted lord over all other creatures, and the product of the whole earth was granted to him for sustenance and delight.

Such was the creation of the world, of which when God had taken a general survey, he pronounced it "very good." On the seventh day he "rested from all his work which he had created and made," and therefore appointed it to be observed by man as an holy rest, wherein he might contemplate the wonders of the creation, and adore his glorious Maker.

God was then pleased further to display his goodness by placing Adam, for so the first man was named, in the beautiful garden of Eden, \* or Paradise, which he was to dress and to keep, indulging him with a general permission to eat of the fruit of every tree in the garden, even of the Tree of Life, but expressly forbidding him to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. By obedience to this law he was to evince his fidelity to his Maker, and his dependence on him as his supreme Lord and Benefactor: at the same time, to deter him from disobedience, the awful threatening was pronounced, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."†

\* *Eden.* It would be endless to recount the various opinions of Geographers concerning its situation. Moses says that "a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from thence it was parted and became into four heads." Some suppose this river to be the common channel of the Euphrates and Tigris after their confluence, which parted again below the garden into two different channels: so that the two channels before, and the other two after their confluence, constitute the heads mentioned by Moses. If this conjecture be true, it will determine the situation to have been in the South of Mesopotamia: but others place it on Mount Caucasus.

† Whether the Tree of Life was a single tree or an entire species of trees, and whether it had any natural virtue to preserve life, are questions much disputed, but of little consequence. The Tree of Life, however, was a sacrament of that covenant of works, under which Adam was placed; it was a pledge of the favour of God; and by the use of it he maintained commu-



God having given Adam a permission what to eat, and a prohibition what to forbear, puts him in possession of the sovereignty he had before given him; causing all the beasts of the field and fowls of the air to pass before him, that he might give them their names; and whatsoever Adam called any creature, that was its name. And now Adam being the only creature without a companion, God caused a deep sleep to fall on him, and while he slept, took out one of his ribs,\* closing up the flesh again, and made it into a woman, and brought her to him. Adam being sensible of what his Maker had done, as soon as he saw the woman, exclaims, in a kind of rapture, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh:" And, as he had given names to all other creatures, he likewise calls her *WOMAN*, subjoining as a reason, "because she was taken out of man." These two then, being united in so dear a relation, were to be inseparable; so that, in all succeeding ages of the world, a man should leave both father and mother, and adhere to his wife, rendered by marriage indissolubly one. This was the conjugal insti-

nion with his Maker, and acknowledged him as the Author of that better life, which though innocent, he was to seek after, not in himself, but in God, as a liberal rewarder. Witsius thinks that the Tree of Life signified the Son of God, not indeed under the character of a Mediator, (that consideration being peculiar to another covenant) but as he is the Author of Life to man in every condition, and the fountain of all his happiness. Hence Christ is called the Tree of Life. Rev. xxii. 2.

There was another tree, deriving its name from the Knowledge of Good and Evil, this was the Tree of Mortality, as the former was the Tree of Immortality. This was designed for the probation of man. If from a principle of love to God he regarded the probationary precept, he was to acquire the full knowledge of all the good intended for him; but if disobedient, he was to be doomed to the greatest calamity, the extreme evil of which he should know from experience.

\* *Ribs.* Many frivolous quæries have been proposed concerning this circumstance in the creation of woman; but it ought to satisfy us that this mode of her formation was most agreeable to the divine wisdom; and it may suggest some practical hints of no small importance in domestic life. "The woman was taken, not from the head of man, to usurp authority over him; nor from his feet, to be trampled on by him; but from his side, to be regarded as next himself; under his arm to be protected; and near his heart, to be beloved by him."

tution, with the law thereof, in the naked innocency, and unblushing simplicity of the first man and woman, while they abode in the garden of Eden. This was the happy condition of our first parents. Though they were naked they were not ashamed, for they had hitherto contracted no guilt; their conscience was an unspotted tablet, no depraved affections having invaded their chaste souls; for before sin entered, all things were honest and comely.

But the blissful state of this happy pair was but of short continuance; for the Serpent,\* the chief of the fallen angels, envying the happiness of man, who hitherto retained and enjoyed that state of innocence and bliss, which he by ambition had forfeited and lost, contrived to seduce him from his obedience, and draw him into transgression, that he might become a companion in his punishment. In order to which he first attacks the woman, as the weaker vessel, by whom he hoped more easily to prevail on the man. His diabolical project succeeded; for he no sooner accosted her, but he gained his point. With apparent indifference he betrays her into an eager pursuit of her ruin. "Indeed, (saith he,) hath God commanded you not to eat of every tree of the garden?" "Nay, (replies the woman) it is but one tree that is forbidden us; for we may eat of the fruit of every tree in the garden, except of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden; for God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." God's word was positive, "Thou shalt surely die;"† but the woman in repeating it, renders it only

\* *Serpent.* A natural serpent is deemed a creature of peculiar cunning—proverbially wise, Matt. x. 16. But this serpent was the vehicle employed by the Devil, who is called, Rev. xii. 9. "the old serpent"—"the deceiver." The power of speech might be supernaturally allowed on this occasion, and might be pretended to have been acquired by the use of the forbidden tree. It is remarkable that the Serpent was always held sacred among the heathen, and worshipped by many of them: and thus Satan triumphed among them in that creature whereby he ruined man.

† *Die.* The death threatened, included—a deprivation of that holy and happy life of soul as well as body, in the image and favour of God, which

doubtful, and in doubting God's threatening, she seemed to yield. The Serpent finding her staggering, pursues his advantage, and encourages her with an assurance that she should not die; "for (said he,) God knows, that in "the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and "ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil." This inflamed the desire and ambition of the woman, for the fruit was not only tempting to the eye, and grateful to the palate, but desirable for its instructive quality of making one wise. On which, forgetting the prohibition, and dreadful consequences attending it, her curiosity hurries her on to destruction:—She eats of the fruit; and her husband, prevailed upon by the fascinating persuasions of his beautiful consort, forgetful of his obligations to his God, and fondly determined to share with her in the consequences of her conduct, rashly partakes of the interdicted tree. No sooner had they eaten of the baleful fruit, than their eyes were opened; but alas! it was to perceive their own nakedness and misery. They had indeed acquired knowledge, but it was a knowledge, arising from sad experience, that the serpent had betrayed them both, and drawn them from the good which they knew before, into the evil which they knew not. This dear-bought knowledge brought upon them at once both guilt and shame.\* Moses had before observed, that Adam and Eve were naked, and were not ashamed: before sin was committed they were innocent and free from passions, but now they began to feel the disorderly emotions of concupiscence; they were ashamed to see themselves naked, and being put to the poor shifts of art to conceal their new-discovered nakedness, they made themselves

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he enjoyed before his fall. Thus "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all (or *in whom*,) all have sinned." Rom v. 12.

\* "They knew that they were naked," Gen. iii. 7, might be more expressively rendered "they were *sensible* that they were naked; and the nakedness of their bodies was but the external emblem of the nakedness of their souls, for they were now stripped of their original righteousness.

aprons to cover them.\* And now their woe is increased by a sad chain of passions which their disobedience had entailed upon them; guilt attended with shame and slavish fear pursue them: For when they heard the voice of God walking in Paradise, in the cool of the evening, they hid themselves from the face of the Lord among the trees of the garden. God at that time was heard, and made himself known to man after a sensible manner.† He called Adam, saying, "Where art thou?" Not to know where he was, but to make him sensible of his fault. Adam, finding himself discovered, in great confusion was obliged to answer, "I heard thy voice in the garden and was afraid, "because I was naked, therefore I hid myself." In confessing his nakedness he owned his guilt; of which God immediately convicted him; demanding how he came to know that he was naked? Adam, who was not yet grown so hardy as to deny the fact, owned himself guilty, but endeavoured to excuse it, by laying the blame on his wife, not without a tacit reflection on God himself: "The "woman (said he,) whom thou gavest to be with me, gave "me of the fruit and I did eat." God calling the woman to account, said, "What is this thou hast done?" She also readily confessed the fact; but like her husband willing to excuse herself, alledged that she was betrayed into it: "The serpent beguiled me and I did eat." God having by examination brought this unhappy pair to confession and conviction, did not proceed in the same manner with the serpent; but immediately passing sentence upon him, he said "Because thou hast done this, thou "art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the

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\* *Aprons*, or rather *Girdles*; the materials of which might be readily found in the garden; such as the large, long leaves which cover our tea, as it comes in chests from China; these might be easily woven together; so that this circumstance affords no countenance to the impertinent and ludicrous objections of infidels.

† They heard the *Voice*, or as some render it, the *Word* of the Lord God walking, &c. Perhaps He, "the *Word*," who was afterwards "made flesh and dwelt among us." Some communications they certainly had from their Maker before this, and probably in a glorious human form.



“ field ; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou  
 “ eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity be-  
 “ tween thee and the woman, and between thy seed and  
 “ her seed, it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise  
 “ his heel.”\* Then pronouncing sentence on the woman,  
 God said, “ I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and con-  
 “ ception. In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children,  
 “ and thy desire shall be subject to that of thine husband,  
 “ and he shall rule over thee.” And unto Adam he said,  
 “ Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife,  
 “ and hast eaten of the forbidden tree ; cursed be the  
 “ ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it, all  
 “ the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it  
 “ bring forth to thee ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the  
 “ field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till  
 “ thou return to the ground out of which thou wast taken :  
 “ For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

These three criminals having received their doom, God expelled them the garden of Eden, and sent the man to till the ground from whence he was taken ; and placed Cherubims † to preserve the way to the Tree of Life. And

\* To confine this passage to a literal sense, would be, as Sherlock and Newton have observed, to render it unworthy of God or of Moses. Under the serpent's name, the curse is levelled at the great enemy of mankind ; “ by his seed ” or offspring, we understand that “ generation of vipers,” (Matt. iii. 7.) or wicked men, who are “ of their father the devil,” (John, viii. 44.) who in all ages have hissed and shewn their enmity against Christ, and who succeeded so far as to nail him to the cross, and thus wound his heel, i. e. his human, or inferior nature.

Christ is the “ seed of the woman,” (Gal. iv. 4.) who bruised the head of the serpent, or crushed his power over man, by his death on the cross ; who has led “ captivity captive,” and who will finally abolish all his power. Thus was the first intimation of mercy to fallen man, the first gospel promise, included in the sentence pronounced on his seducer.

† *Cherubim*. These are commonly, but erroneously, supposed to be Angels, who, like centinels, were placed to guard the gate of Paradise ; but the *Cherubim*, which signifies “ the likeness of the great-ones,” were most probably emblems of the Deity, figures like those mentioned Ezek. 1. : such as were placed in the Tabernacle and Temple over the Mercy-Seat. This was the symbol of the divine presence, before which it is likely that Adam offered sacrifice. The design of the whole, was “ to keep the way of the tree of life,” not to prevent the coming at it, but for “ preserving,” or “ observing the way to it”—to shew that by the employ-

thus from the fall of our first parents proceeded all those evils which deface the beautiful works of their great Creator; and hence sin, pain, and death were entailed upon their posterity. With guilty shame they are forced to quit their seat of innocence, and exchange fair Eden's garden for an uncultivated world, which produced nothing but what was effected by labour and toil, and where they had no other prospect but an endless variety of cares and troubles.

And now Adam being expelled from Paradise knew his wife Eve, who conceiving, bare him a son, whom she called Cain, \* and said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." After him she bare Adam another son, who was named Abel. These two brethren, when they grew up to manhood, chose two different employments; Cain, the elder, whose disposition was sordid and avaricious, betook himself to tillage; but Abel, who was of a more gentle and humane temper, delighted in a pastoral employment, and fed sheep. In process of time each of them brought their offering to the Lord. Cain's was the fruits of the ground; and Abel's the firstlings with the fat of his flock. The Lord accepted the sacrifice of Abel, but rejected that of Cain. † Hereupon Cain was provoked, which the falling

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ment of the sword in shedding blood, and the fire in burnt-sacrifice, was the only way of reconciliation to an offended God.

The reader who wishes to see this fully illustrated, may consult "Lord Forbes's Thoughts on Religion, natural and revealed," and "Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon on the word Cherubim."

\* *Cain*, signifies Possession, for she fondly hoped that this son might prove the seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head. "I have gotten the Man-Jehovah;" so some render the sentence; but she was greatly mistaken, for "he was of that wicked one"—the serpent—the devil. 1 John iii. 12.

† It was "by faith," that Abel offered a more excellent, a fuller, a more complete offering than Cain; (Heb. xi. 4.) and faith has always respect to a revelation and appointment of God. The fact was, that Abel, as a penitent sinner, gladly signified his faith in the promised Saviour by a bloody sacrifice, knowing that without shedding of blood there could be no remission; while Cain, proud and pharisaical, merely brings a thank-offering to God, implying no humiliation for sin, nor desire for mercy. Cain seems to have been a kind of infidel—a natural religion-

of his countenance plainly indicated; upon which God expostulates with him, and gives him to understand it was his own fault that his offering was not pleasing, and if he did well, he should be accepted; if he sinned he should be punished for his offence.

But this reproof made no impression on Cain; instead of being sensible of his fault, he became incensed against his brother, and taking occasion not long after to discourse with him when they were together in the field, he fell upon him and slew him. But he is soon called to an account; for God enquiring of him where his brother was, he very insolently as well as falsely answered, "He knew not:" And, as if he had been affronted by the question concerning him, he cried, "Am I my brother's keeper?" But the Lord not only charged him with the murder of his brother, but convicted him of it also. "What hast thou done," said he, "the voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground? And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength: Nor is that all; but a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be upon the earth." This sentence was gentle in comparison of the horrid crime; but Cain, amazed at it, began to be sensible of the heinousness of his offence and of the misery to which he was reduced. "My offence;"\* said he, "is too great to obtain pardon."

man—a rejector of revelation and of the atonement. "If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted"—or rather *have the dignity*—the honour of the priesthood, which from the first belonged to the elder brother, but which he forfeited by rejecting the proper sacrifice. This was perhaps the ground of the quarrel, and which issued in the murder of pious Abel.

\* *My offence, &c.* All the versions make Cain speak like one in despair. Gen. iv. 13. The vulgar Latin makes him say, My iniquity is greater than that I should obtain pardon. Pagnine, Tremellius, the French, and ours, My Iniquity is greater than I can bear. The former is the meaning which the LXX. and Chaldee Paraphrase have given it: But why should we not translate it with some Rabbins, Is my iniquity greater than that it can be pardoned?



This was an expression of despair rather than of repentance; and he seems not so sensible of his sin as of his punishment. “Behold, said he, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, and it shall come to pass that every one\* that findeth me shall slay me.” But God having taken this cause under his immediate cognizance, and fixed the punishment, secured him against that dread, declaring that whosoever should slay Cain, vengeance should be taken of him sevenfold—that is, in a very grievous manner. God intimating thereby, that vengeance is to be left to him, and that it is not lawful for private persons of their own authority to kill any one. And that none by mistake might slay Cain, “God set a mark upon him, lest any finding him should kill him.”† Upon this, Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, which is to the eastward of Eden, beyond the country of Ba-

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\* *Every one, &c.* From hence some have pretended that there were other people on earth not descended from Adam; but it should be remembered that the murder of Abel did not happen till near 130 years after the creation; and though we read of only three of Adam’s children, yet there were, probably, many others, whose offspring in that space of time might be very numerous.

Cain went out from the *presence*, or “*faces*,” of the Lord, as the Hebrew word is—that is, from the cherubic faces, or emblem of his presence, where divine worship was performed, and thus renounced religion. He then dwelt in a country *afterwards* known by the name of Nod, and there built a city, where probably the irreligious part of Adam’s posterity, and his own, which might be numerous, joined him as their governor. But the following elucidation is more satisfactory. The word NOD, verse 16, is the same with that, verses 12 and 14, translated a *Vagabond*. Why it was rendered differently in these two places we know not: had the word been uniformly translated *Vagabond*, the sense would have been clear throughout. Verse 12, God says “Thou shalt be (*Nod*) a Vagabond.” Ver. 14, Cain says, “I shall be (*Nod*) a Vagabond;” and verse 16, Moses says, “he went from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of (*Nod*)—a Vagabond,”—flying from place to place, pursued by the terrors of a guilty conscience. Dr. Hunter’s Sacred Biog. Lect. v.

† What this mark was, is matter of mere conjecture; probably it was the peculiar cast of his countenance, pointing him out as a monster of wretchedness, in himself, and an object of horror to others.



bylon ; and having taken a wife, she conceived and bare him a son, named Enoch, after whom Cain called the City which he afterwards built. Enoch begat Irad ; Irad begat Mehujael ; Mehujael begat Methusael ; and Methusael begat Lamech. Of him the Scripture takes particular notice, and seems to point him out as the person who first introduced polygamy, for he married two wives, called Adah and Zillah. By the first he had two children : Jabel, who invented the use of tents, and the management of cattle ; and Jubal, who was the inventor of Musical Instruments. By his wife Zillah he had a son called Tubal-Cain, who first discovered the art of working metals, and made armour and warlike weapons. This is the register of Cain's posterity for seven generations, which Moses might enumerate perhaps to shew who were the inventors of certain arts, and instrumental in corrupting the better seed of Adam. But of Cain's more immediate race, none were so eminently barbarous as Lamech ; for his wives, knowing that all men hated him for his cruelty, were under great apprehensions for his personal safety ; upon which to satisfy them, he boastingly said, that none could resist him, for he had murdered a man, though he was wounded ; and making himself secure to them, he tells them, that if Cain's death were to be avenged seven-fold, his would be seventy times seven, valuing himself upon more murders than Cain could. And thus much for the descendants of Cain, who were all swept away by the deluge.

Adam, being deprived of his pious son Abel, God was pleased to supply the loss by the gift of another, whom he named Seth ; for, said Eve, " God hath given me another son instead of Abel whom Cain slew." This man had a son named Enos, of whom it is said that in his time men began to call upon the name of the Lord ; which may be understood of a public worship.\* Through this

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\* Good men had always prayed to the Lord, both privately and socially in their families ; but men being now multiplied, it is supposed that in the time of Enos, public assemblies for the worship of Jehovah were first instituted, or at least remarkably revived. Others conceive that the words signify that then men began

Seth, Adam's line is by Moses continued in ten generations before the flood, with the age of each of those long-lived fathers. Among these, in the seventh degree from Adam, lived Enoch, to whom this singular testimony and character was given, That God was so pleased with him, that he translated him immediately to heaven. Enoch\* left behind him his son Methuselah, the longest lived of all the Patriarchs, and Lamech, the father of Noah, whose birth was congratulated with this prophetic rapture by his father, That he should prove a comfort to his family for the curse which the Lord had laid upon the earth: This prophecy was verified; for Noah, by his faith and piety, delivered the church, and preserved it from utter destruction.

By this time the world began to grow populous, and though Seth and his progeny for some ages were shy of conversing with Cain and his family, yet time wore off that aversion, and as the world grew more replenished with people, the generation of the righteous indulging themselves in too great a liberty, entertained a more free and familiar conversation with the wicked offspring of Cain, than was either proper or becoming. By which means having exposed themselves to the allurements of

to call (to invoke or pray) IN the name of the Lord—that is of the Lord (Jesus) the promised Messiah, the Mediator between God and man. Others think that public preaching began to be used—men began to *call—proclaim—preach*, in the name of the Lord. Some eminent revival of religion, however, seems plainly intended.

\* *Enoch.* From the New Testament we learn that “before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God;” and St. Paul adds, Heb. xi. 9. “that without faith it is impossible to please him.” It was by faith therefore, that he attained to such a high distinction; now, as faith has relation to a testimony, it cannot be doubted that he was acquainted with the way of reconciliation by the promised Redeemer, and embraced the promise, as the ground of his confidence towards God; nor can we conceive that he could be ignorant of the first coming of Christ, whose second appearance he predicted. (Jude, v. 14.) This faith of Enoch was accompanied, as true faith always is, by holiness of heart and life, which is emphatically called—“walking with God.” His translation to heaven, without sickness or death, was at once a high testimony of Divine approbation, and an early assurance to the world of a future state.

their women, the lust of the eye prevailed upon the Sons of God \* to intermarry with them. It is highly probable that the offspring of the righteous, who professed themselves to be the Sons of God, were by this time much degenerated from the piety of their ancestors : for we find, immediately after, that God complained of the wickedness of man in general. But however depraved they were before this alliance with the wicked, their sins were soon multiplied and aggravated ; so that God, perceiving the corruption to be general, and daily increasing, is said, (speaking after the manner of men) to repent that he had made man on the earth, and to be grieved at his heart. But Noah, a man of singular eminence in piety, found favour in his sight, and for his sake, his family, consisting of eight persons, were exempted from the general destruction, which was soon to overwhelm mankind.

Of this approaching judgment, the merciful God gave warning long before he executed it ; for though the wickedness of man was so great, that God said, *My Spirit shall not always strive with man* ; my justice provokes, my mercy intercedes ; I am at strife with myself, how to deal with this sinful generation : yet since man is also flesh, I will not sweep him away with a sudden destruction, I will yet give him time to return, and repent ; his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. The hundred † and twenty years are almost expired, the term

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\* By " the Sons of God," we generally understand the posterity of Adam who persevered in the worship of Jehovah ; and by the daughters of men, the descendants of Cain, who were addicted to impiety and vice ; and that the intermarriages of these soon destroyed the remains of religion and virtue, and so hastened on the general destruction : But it is not without reason that others conceive that by " the Sons of God," are signified persons of power or authority (and magistrates are called Gods, Psalm lxxxii. 11.) who abusing their influence, took, that is by force, the daughters of men, (i. e. of the inferior ranks of society) and ravished them at their pleasure : and this seems to be the violence and corruption complained of Gen. vi. 11. &c. which a holy God so much resented, and so awfully punished.

† *Hundred, &c.* This is a great instance of God's forbearance, and shews the difference between the mercy of God and that of man. For man seldom gives warning where he intends to strike ; and more seldom strikes, but where he intends to destroy. " Why dost thou give notice of thy Judgments thou art about



of reprieve is at hand : And yet they shall have a second warning. God was unwilling to destroy them yet, unless they would wilfully rush on their ruin ; for seven days hence, says he, I will cause it to rain forty days upon the earth. It will be seven days before it begin to rain, and it will continue forty days raining. If in that time they had turned from their evil ways, their doom probably had been reversed, as that of Nineveh afterwards was, at the preaching of Jonah.

But before the hundred and twenty years were expired, God, seeing no amendment, declared to Noah his resolution to destroy all flesh from off the earth by a flood of waters ; but for the preservation of Noah and his family, and seed to replenish the depopulated earth, he commanded him to build an ark \*, or vessel of vast dimensions, to receive them, and some of all creatures. This ark God directed Noah to make of Gopher, (the Cedar or Cypress,) and to pitch it both within and without, that the water might not penetrate it. The length of it was to be four hundred and fifty feet, the breadth seventy-five, and the

“ to execute ? That I may never execute those evils which I give notice of,” saith St. Chrysostom, answering in the Lord’s stead. And to the like purpose St. Jerom : “ God, because he desires to punish no man, threatens them with his punishments like a Father, and shakes his rod, because he has no mind to correct his children.”

\* *Ark.* Some of the ancients not thinking the ark, by these dimensions, spacious enough to contain all the creatures with their provision, &c. have extended this measure by the Geometrical Cubit ; which would make the ark six times larger. But according to the computation of Bishop Wilkins and other learned men, it is plain that the ark was capable of containing all those creatures that came. Had we never seen a ship, and should be told how many men, and what provisions and merchandize one will carry, it would seem to us no less incredible, than what Moses tells of the contents of the ark. But the Geometrical calculation makes out, that they are both equally possible, and shews that Moses spoke truth. If the ark contained, as it is computed, 43,000 tons of lading, which is more than equal to 40 of our ships of 1000 tons each, and if all the animals contained in the ark would not exceed the bulk of 500 horses, there would certainly be room enough and to spare. Peter Jansen, a Dutch Merchant, about the year 1600, caused a ship to be built according to the proportions of the ark, 120 feet long, &c. which was found to be admirably adapted for stowage and sailing:

height forty-five. There were three stories or decks in it; the first and second were adapted to the use of the beasts and reptiles and the stowage of the necessary provisions, and the third, or upper one, was probably the residence of Noah and his family, with the winged tribes. Every story might be divided into several parts; and there was a window above, or an opening, which went quite round to give light to the whole vessel; and the door, or entering port, was in the side.

Noah having received his directions how to make the ark, and an assurance from God, that though he destroyed all flesh beside, yet he would establish his covenant with him, finished the ark seven days before the rain began to fall.\* All things being thus prepared, God gave notice to Noah to come into the ark with his family, and to take with him every living thing of all flesh, both of cattle and beasts of the field, birds and fowls of the air, and creeping things, two of each sort, a male and a female; to keep seed to stock the earth again. But of clean beasts, he was ordered to take them in by sevens, three pairs of males, and three of females, and the seventh for sacrifice. All which creatures, God, by a secret instinct, disposed† to come and offer themselves unto him; and he was also to take in food of all sorts, sufficient to sustain himself and them.

\* An inspired writer has taught us, (Heb. xi. 7.) that faith was the principle of Noah's obedience. "By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." In full assurance that God would accomplish both the threatening and the promise, he sustained the labour of the immense undertaking, nobly braved the contempt of a scoffing world, and thus condemned its vice and unbelief.

† *Disposed.* Some have questioned how Noah could bring all sorts of birds and beasts to one place? The question is ridiculous, considering it was not Noah that brought them, but God, by his secret Providence disposing them: Though it might justly be answered in the case of Noah alone, exclusive of God's power, That all sorts of creatures having been created in that country, some of every kind had remained there, which Noah, without any miracle, might have tamed some time before the flood; so that when the Deluge came on, they might naturally be brought to the ark at the time Noah shut it up.

Noah, having observed these directions, enters the ark with his family in the Six hundredth year of his age: and on the Seventeenth day of the Second month, (which was about the beginning of May) the whole face of Nature began to put on a dismal aspect, as if the earth were to suffer a final dissolution, and all things return to their primitive chaos. The cataracts of Heaven were opened, and the sea, forgetting its bounds,\* overspread the earth with a dreadful inundation. Too late wretched man is sensible of his deserved fate, and in vain he climbs the highest hills to shun the vengeance of his angry God; the lofty mountains yield but a short reprieve, and every little refuge disappears. Forty days and nights it continued raining, at the end of which the ark began to float; the surface of the waters being fifteen cubits, or two and twenty feet and a half above the tops of the highest mountains. Here was a dismal face of things! Instead of the earth, adorned with the productions of nature, and the improvements of art, a watery desert appeared, which presented nothing to the view of Heaven, but the floating wrecks of men and other creatures, who, except Noah, and those in the ark, were swept away with one common destruction.

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\* "The fountains of the great deep were broken up," Gen. vii. 11. The great deep is no other than that vast collection of waters in the bowels of the earth mentioned, Gen. i. 9. "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together in one place." These, at the Deluge, were caused to come forth and overflow the earth. This easily accounts for the Universal Deluge, since we perceive where such a body of waters could be found, as were sufficient to overwhelm the whole surface of the globe. While the flood continued, the earth and waters were reduced to the same situation in which they were at the creation, before the waters were ordered to unite, and to let the dry land appear. And that the earth was thus placed between the waters, at first; and that it was by these waters the flood was produced, cannot be denied, if we read 2 Pet. iii. 5, 6. "By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth, standing out of the water, and in the water; whereby the world, that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." In various other places we read of these waters, see Deut. xxxiii. 13. Job, xii. 15. xxvi. 10. xxxviii. 9—11. Psalm, xxxiii. 7. From these immense store-houses water enough would issue to cover the highest mountains.—The universality of the deluge appears incontrovertible from the organic remains of the ante-diluvian



God, having thus satisfied the claims of his justice in the vengeance with which he had long threatened mankind, graciously remembered Noah, who, with his family, had been confined in their floating tabernacle for near a year, for so long the waters continued to overwhelm the earth. In fulfilment of his promise to Noah, he caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters were assuaged. The fountains of the deep, and the windows of heaven were stopped; the earth gradually became dry, and the ark rested on one of the eminences of Mount Ararat, in Armenia. This was on the third of October, and on the twelfth of December the tops of the mountains appeared. This was a welcome sight to Noah; who, wisely considering, that though these were visible, the valleys might still be overflowed, waited forty days longer, before he attempted any farther discovery; and then opening a window of the ark, he liberated a raven, to try whether the waters were dried up; but the raven did not return. Seven days after he sent out a dove, which finding no place to rest her foot, returned to the ark. Seven days after, he sent her out again, and she returned with an Olive-branch. By this, Noah knew that the waters did not cover the earth where the Olive-trees stood. However, he staid seven days longer, and then let out the dove the third time, which

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world, found in almost every part of the globe, and frequently in the most elevated situations; notwithstanding which, sceptical ingenuity has long denied the possibility of there being a quantity of water sufficient to rise above the mountains, and deluge the whole earth.—The wonderful discoveries of Franklin, Ingenhouz, and Priestley, in Electricity, seem however to put this part of the question beyond a doubt; for this active and all-powerful principle is ascertained to be the grand agent, whereby water is both taken up and suspended in the atmosphere in form of an invisible vapour, to an extent almost incalculable, and sufficient to cover the highest mountains, if deprived of the Electric fluid, by which it is sustained. That something of this kind happened at the flood from the absorption of the Electric fluid, as a secondary cause of the deluge, is most highly probable.—And hence the rain of forty days, and the forcible expression of Moses, which has so much exercised the commentators, “that the fountains of the great deep were broken up;” for it is well known that in Earthquakes, whose immediate cause is the discharge of Electrical matter from the Earth, the Sea is greatly agitated, and throws up its waters upon the land in a most violent and extraordinary manner.

did not return; whereupon Noah prepared to go out of the ark, by uncovering the roof of it. Yet, having a pious regard to God's providence and direction, as well in coming forth, as in going in, he continued fifty-five days longer, that the earth might be dry, and left the ark on the twenty-seventh day of the second month, and first of the week. Thus there was a complete solar year, from the beginning of the flood, to the day when Noah and his wife, their sons and their wives, came out of the ark, with all the living creatures that had gone into it. It was then the month of May, when the trees and plants bud and shoot out. Nature puts on her youthful vernal dress again, all things appear in their former gaiety, and the earth abundantly produces food for the creatures preserved in the ark; and all other parts of the creation contributed to the use and pleasure of man, as they did before the deluge.

The earth being thus prepared to receive Noah and his family, he, by God's express command, descends from the ark, with the creatures committed to his charge; and being safely landed, the first thing he did, was to offer a sacrifice to the Lord; in order to which he built an altar, and taking of all the clean birds and beasts, made a burnt offering.\* The sacrifice was acceptable to the Lord, and drew his blessing on men, on beasts, and on the earth itself; For God not only declared his acceptance of Noah, but made a covenant with him, (and in him with his posterity) graciously promising, that he would not again curse the ground for man's sake, *though*† the imagination of his heart was evil; nor interrupt the seasons any more.

\* There can be no reason to doubt that sacrifices were of God's own appointment, instituted on purpose to typify the only way of forgiveness by the death of the Redeemer, and derived all their efficacy from the reference they had to his propitiation for the sins of men. The peculiar expression "the Lord smelled a sweet savour," is best explained by Eph. v. 2. "Christ hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour."

From this passage it appears that the distinction of clean and unclean does not depend originally on the law of Moses, but had its origin before the flood, probably at the first publication of grace to Adam.

† *Though*. This is commonly translated *for*, but very injuriously; for it makes



The order of nature, destroyed by the flood, being restored by God's promise, he particularly blessed Noah and his children, commanding them to multiply and fill the earth; appointed man lord over all the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and fishes of the sea: And whereas hitherto men had lived upon vegetables, God having at first appointed herbs and fruits for their food; after the flood, their fare was enlarged, and they were allowed to eat flesh. Only he excepted blood, and meats strangled, from which the blood \* had not been drawn. They were therefore first to take away the life, by letting out the blood, and then to dress and eat the flesh. But when he thus permitted them to kill all sorts of animals, he strictly charged them not to shed the blood of man, threatening those, whether men or beasts, that should shed it, with vengeance. In short, God ratified the promise he had made to Noah, not to destroy men and beasts any more by an universal deluge; and to render it more solemn, confirmed it by a covenant and alliance between himself and man, placing the rainbow † as a sign of it in the sky:—

the sacred Author speak quite contrary to what he designed, and is an affront to the justice, goodness, and wisdom of God.

\* *Blood.* The blood of animals was strictly prohibited, because devoted to a sacred use. It was the life of the animal; and being shed in sacrifice, denoted that the life of the sinner was forfeited, but that God accepted the blood of another in the sinner's stead, even of "the Lamb of God," (typified by the clean animal,) "who taketh away the sin of the world."

In sacrifice, which was daily to be repeated, as the highest act of devotion, man had the strongest memorandum of his fall; of the forfeiture thereby of that life, for which the blood, the life of the victim, was shed! of the anger of God, which must have consumed him, if what was represented by the burnt-offering had not interposed. Reflections on this symbolical act must prepare the mind for prayer and praise. Probably, for many ages, no animal food was eaten, but that of the creatures offered in sacrifice, so that all animal food was originally sacramental; the body and mind were thus mutually gratified.

† *Rainbow.* This beautiful phenomenon is caused by the refraction of the sun's rays in the drops of descending rain, and consequently was seen before, as well as since the deluge; the difference is, that it was constituted, after the flood, by divine appointment, to be a token of God's covenant that he would no more deluge the earth.

Not as an instrument of terror, but a bow unstrung :—not in his hand, but suspended in the clouds ;—an emblem of his covenant, that he would no more suddenly shoot forth the arrows of his wrath, though never so justly provoked.

And now the whole race of Cain being cut off by the flood, it might reasonably have been expected, that the new world would have been planted with better people : but as in the ark there were unclean beasts preserved, as well as clean, so in Noah's family there was a wicked Ham, as well as a pious Shem and Japheth. For of the three sons of Noah, who had been so wonderfully preserved with him in the ark, to repeople the world, there was one of them who drew the curse of God upon himself ; and instead of being the head of a holy race, was the father of so wicked a posterity, as to become the object of God's anger and reprobation. And this was Ham :—for the first instance of man's impiety, after the deluge, was that of his discovering his father's nakedness, in a very rude and profane manner ; which happened thus :

Noah, having in a most devout and solemn manner offered a sacrifice of praise to God for his preservation, received the establishment of God's covenant with himself and his posterity for a perpetual security, and a command to multiply and replenish the earth, applied himself to husbandry ; and amongst other improvements which he made of the ground, he planted a vineyard. Natural curiosity invited him to taste of the fruit of his labour, but not aware of the inebriating quality of the wine, he fell into a state of intoxication ; during which he lay in an indecent posture, his body being uncovered, in his tent. Graceless Ham was the first that discovered his father in this condition ; who instead of concealing his weakness, betrays him to his brethren, and made him the subject of ridicule and derision. But Shem and Japheth, abhorring their brother's conduct, and blushing at their father's situation, took a garment, and laid it on their shoulders, and so went backwards and covered him. Noah being recovered from his wine, and understanding how his younger son had treated him, pronounced a curse on his posterity in the person of Canaan. “ Cursed, (said he)

“ be Canaan,\* a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren.” But when he found how commendably his other sons had behaved, he rewarded their respectful attention with this blessing: “ Blessed† be the Lord God of Shem, God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem;‡ and let Canaan be his Servant.”

We have no mention of any other children Noah had, but these three sons; from each of whom descended a numerous offspring, which afterwards peopled many countries, and in process of time, the whole inhabited world. And now there was but one language used and known

\* There is some difficulty in this passage; but if we suppose (with Bishop Newton,) the omission of a word or two by the transcriber, the whole will be easy.

“ And Noah said,

Cursed be (Ham, the father of) Canaan;

A servant of servants shall he be to his brethren.

And he said,

Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem,

For he shall dwell in the tents of Shem;

God shall enlarge Japheth,

And Canaan shall be their Servant.”

By this prophecy the whole race of Ham is devoted to servitude; not that this was to take place immediately, but was to be fulfilled in process of time, when they should forfeit their liberties by their wickedness. The continent of Africa was peopled by the Children of Ham; and for how many ages have the better part of that country lain under the dominion of the Romans, then of the Saracens, and now of the Turks? and of the poor negroes, how many thousands are annually bought and sold, like beasts in the market, and conveyed from one quarter of the world to do the work of beasts in another? See Bishop Newton on the Prophecies.

† *Blessed.* The blessing of God had effect; for the worship of the true God continued in the race of Shem, and the posterity of Japheth possessed a vast extent of land, peopling all Europe, and part of Asia; for which reason it is said, He shall dwell in the tents of Shem, that is, among the progeny of the latter.

‡ *Shem.* Shem is called the Father of all the children of Eber. Gen. x. 21. Eber was great grandson, or the fourth from Shem: and from him, both the people of Israel were called Ebrews, (or Hebrews) and the language they spake was called the Hebrew tongue; so that from Shem came the Jews, besides many other people that inhabited Asia. This part of the world, which is called Europe, is generally held to have been peopled by the posterity of Japheth.



among men; who hitherto dwelt at the foot of the mountains of Armenia, not far, it is likely, from the place where the ark rested. Their offspring, multiplying by degrees, spread themselves into the neighbouring countries, as Syria and Mesopotamia: And the number still increasing, they took their course westward, till finding an inviting plain in the land of Shinar,\* they sat down in order to settle there. †

And now those two unruly passions, ambition and fear, began to possess the minds of men. They were desirous to perpetuate their name, and no less afraid that they should be scattered abroad. To effect the one, and prevent the other, they agreed to build themselves a city, and a tower, of such extraordinary height, that it is said, they designed the top thereof should reach to heaven. † The projected height of this vast structure hath been the occasion of a conjecture in some, that they not only intended it as a monument of their power, but as a place of refuge, in case of another flood; which shewed their distrust of God's veracity in keeping his covenant, that he would not bring a general deluge over the earth again. But whether pride or fear put them upon this project, it is certain they undertook this vast work, and being unanimous, they were not discouraged at the greatness of the undertaking; but, in order to it, began to make brick, which they burnt; and

\* *Shinar*. This is by some supposed to have been the place where the Garden of Eden was: afterwards called Chaldea.

† We cannot suppose architects like these so stupid as to imagine they could reach the seat of the gods, or become immortal by getting thither. The plain meaning is, that when they had finished this lofty tower (500 feet high) its *Top* (a temple or altar on the summit) should be dedicated to the *Heavens*—the heavenly bodies, or powers, by which they intended to honour the gods. The words *might reach*, are added by the translators. Till now the earth was of one *Lip*, or *Confession*, acknowledging the only living and true God; but now a grand attempt was made to establish idolatry, in the worship of the heavens, and to make a *Name* above every other name, for the purpose of worship. But, by the divine interference, they fell into innumerable disputes; they were ultimately scattered abroad, their scheme failed, and the place was called Babel, (*Confusion*.) The variation of language was the natural result of their wide separation from each other.

instead of mortar, they made a cement of Bitumen, a pitchy substance which flows out of the earth in the plains of Mesopotamia.

Thus they began, and for some time proceeded in their intended work, but God, who saw their arrogance and presumption, resolved to disappoint them, and shew them that they were not out of the reach of his Providence and Justice. The Almighty therefore looking on their vanity with indignation, expostulates thus with himself: "Behold they are all one, and have but one language, and this they begin to do; Shall\* they not be restrained in all that they have imagined to do? Yes; we will go down and confound their language, that they may not understand one another." Thus the great Creator took council with his own wisdom and power, and which he immediately put in execution; for he stopped their proceedings by confounding their tongues, so that they spake several languages, and could not understand each other. Their confused dialects produced different ideas in the minds of the men of each family, which, for want of understanding each other's meaning, they applied to improper objects. This occasioned so great a disorder, that they were forced to relinquish the building: and being hereby rendered incapable of carrying on their intended work, and of conversing one with another, and so deprived of the comforts and pleasures of mutual intercourse, they willingly parted and dispersed themselves; they who were of one language one way, and those who were of another going another way. Thus God, by scattering them abroad upon the face of the earth, at once both disappointed their design, and accomplished his own; which was to re-people the earth more generally and speedily, than it is

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\* *Sball*, &c. Gen. xi. 6. The versions say of the builders of the tower of Babel, "And now nothing shall be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." But this is untrue; for God soon put a stop to their design by confounding them, and scattering them abroad. We should therefore translate the text, with the Flemish revisers and Leusden, thus: "Shall they not be restrained in all that they have imagined to do?" Which was soon executed accordingly.



probable they, of themselves, would otherwise have done.

Upon\* this separation, the race of Shem settled in Asia; those of Ham, part in Asia, and part in Africa; and the greatest part of those of Japheth in Europe. Now among those aspiring builders of Babel, was Nimrod, a bold and enterprizing man, who is by Moses called the mighty hunter† before the Lord. It is certain he was a very barbarous and tyrannical man, and laid the foundation of the first great empire in the world, which was called the Babylonian, from the city Babel, or Babylon, its metropolis; from whence, going afterwards into Assyria, he built the great city Nineveh; and from thence this monarchy was afterwards called the Assyrian, the first of the four great empires of the world.

The confusion of tongues, and dispersion of the family of Noah, happened a hundred and one years after the flood; for Peleg the son of Eber, who was great grandson to Shem, is reckoned to have been born in the hundredth and first year after the flood, and had his name (Peleg) given him from that division of the earth, which in his time was parted among Noah's posterity.

And now Almighty God having disappointed vain mankind in raising an everlasting monument of their folly,

\* *Upon*, &c. Moses, Gen. chap. x. and xii. particularly sets down the nations descended from Noah, his sons, grandsons, and great grandchildren. The names of most of those nations being changed, many of them cannot certainly be known; but there are some still remaining. The names of the sons of Shem, as Elam, Assur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram, are known in history, where we find the Elamites, the Assyrians, the Arphaxadites, the Lydians, and the Aramites. The name of Chus, the son of Ham, is given in Scripture to the Egyptians and the Arabs; the names of most of their children agreeing with those of the nations of Arabia.

† *Hunter*. Not literally but figuratively. "He began to be a mighty one in the earth; (Gen. x. 8.)—A mighty hunter before the Lord; (ver. 9.)—and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel." He was a mighty setter up of the Heavens for a God, a great seducer of others to worship that false Deity; and not improbably a mighty persecutor of the true worshippers. We read of hunting souls, Ezek. xiii. 17, &c. Jer. v. 26.

and by so wide a separation put it out of their power to attempt the like again, began to lay the foundation of an holy city, that is, his Church ; and chose Abram to be head of a race, elect and faithful, which should endure for ever. And herein it is to be observed, that Moses in his relation chuses rather to write the genealogy of Thare or Terah, than of the other descendants of Shem ; because Terah was the father of Abram, afterwards named Abraham, who was called by the Lord to be the father of the Faithful, and of the worshippers of the true God ; for his father Terah served other gods, as we may see in Joshua, xxiv. 2.

This Terah had three sons, Haran, Nahor, and Abram ; for that is the order of their births. Haran, who was much older than his brethren, dying before his father, left one son named Lot, and two daughters, one of whom was named Milcha, and the other Iscah, both married to their uncles ; Milcha to Nahor, and Iscah to Abram, as the Jews record, who will have her to be called Sarai, for her beauty and housewifry. †

After the death of Haran, Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot, and Sarai, and carried them from Ur, to the land of Canaan ; but in their way coming to Haran, or Charran, they took up their abode there for a while ; during which time Terah died, being an hundred \* and forty-five years old. After the death of Terah, God com-

\* *Hundred, &c.* St. Stephen says, that Abraham, after the death of his father, removed from Charran to the land of Canaan, Acts, vii. 4. and Gen. xii. 5. it is said, that Abraham was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Charran ; and Gen. xi. 26, it is said, that Terah was seventy years old when he begat Abraham ; and ver. 32. that he died, being two hundred and five years old. But at this rate Terah must have lived sixty years after Abraham's going from Charran : For seventy-five, the number of Abraham's years when he left Charran, being added to seventy, the number of Terah's years when he begat Abraham, make one hundred forty and five years only ; whereas it is said, Gen. xi. 32. that he lived two hundred and five. But this must certainly proceed from a fault crept into the text of Moses ; and that of the two hundred and five years, which are given to Terah, when he died at Charran, he only lived an hundred and forty-five, according to the Samaritan version and Chronicle, which, without doubt, agree with the Hebrew copy, from whence they were translated.

manded Abram to leave this country, and to go into the land which he would shew him. He promised that a mighty people should descend from him, and engaged to bless him, and in him to bless all the nations of the earth. Abram, without hesitation, believes the word of God, including two such great advantages, as making him the head of a great people, and blessing all the world in HIM, who was to proceed from his loins.\*

Abram, with his whole family, and that of his nephew Lot, prepares for his journey towards the land of promise, though no particular place was yet pointed out, God intending thereby more fully to prove his faith and obedience, which was clearly evinced by his ready compliance with the Divine command. Accordingly Abram set out, and pursued his journey till he came into the land of Canaan to that place which is called the Oak † of Moreh. Having passed through some parts of the land, the Lord appeared again to him, and gave him a promise of it to his posterity, long before he had any issue, and while it was possessed by other people; for it was then inhabited by the Canaanites. Abram, however, to shew his faith and

\* That this included an intimation of the Redemption of man by Jesus Christ, is evident from Gal. i. 8. "The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, (namely, in Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. xxii. 18.) In thee, shall all nations be blessed, i. e. By their faith in that glorious person who is to descend from thee, all persons of every nation, who resemble thee in their ready reception of the divine message, shall be blessed." Dr. Doddridge. in loc.

† *Oak*. The Chaldee paraphrase, and most Rabbies, transform into a plain the Oak of Moreh, at which God appeared to Abraham, Gen. xii. 6, and most versions transform this Oak into a Valley; and if we were to give it another signification, we must rather make it signify a Valley than a Plain; because Sychem was situated in the valley of Aulon, so called from the word Elon, which signifies an Oak. It was under this Oak that Jacob hid the strange gods which his servants kept; and it was likewise under it that Deborah, Rebecca's nurse, was buried, Gen. xxxv. 4, 8. It was also under it that Joshua set up a great stone, Joshua, xxiv. 26. and that Abimelech was made king, Judges, ix. 6. where our translators render it Plain. But here, in Gen. xii. 6. the Septuagint render it High oak. But more of this in our note on the same word when we speak of the Oak of Mamre, a little farther.

gratitude, erected an altar in that place to the Lord, who had appeared to him, and made him so gracious a promise. Removing from thence to a mountain, which is on the east of Bethel, he pitched his tent between Bethel and Hai : and there he erected an altar to the Lord, and called upon his name. But he had not continued long in Canaan, before he was forced to remove ; for a famine happening in that country, he was obliged to go into Egypt ; which lying near that part of Canaan, and being a fruitful country, he determined to travel thither, and stay there for some time.

While they were upon the confines of Egypt, having observed the difference in point of beauty, between his own wife and the Egyptian women ; a painful apprehension arose in his mind, that her beauty might expose him to personal danger. And because the world had not then arrived to that height of dissoluteness, as lightly to invade the marriage bed, nuptial ties being held too sacred to be violated, his fear suggested, that if Sarai passed for his wife, they would murder him, in order to enjoy her without the imputation of adultery ; a crime which seems to have been held in greater detestation than murder itself. To prevent this danger, he opened his mind to Sarai ; and ascribing the cause of his fears to her beauty, intreated her to say she was his sister, that she might not be taken for his wife ; by which means he hoped not only to escape the apprehended danger, but also to fare the better for her sake.

Abram's fears and apprehensions were not groundless : for no sooner was he come into Egypt, than the beauty of Sarai was much admired, and became the common theme of conversation, which at length reaching the ears of the king, excited in his mind a strong desire to behold the beautiful stranger. In consequence of which she is immediately brought to court, and introduced to Pharaoh ; while Abram, who was understood to be her brother, was courteously treated for her sake, the king bestowing many presents upon him. Here the providence of God remarkably interposed in preserving the honour of the Patriarch, and the chastity of his consort. For to deter Pharaoh and



his court from any dishonourable attempt, God, by inflicting some sudden sickness or bodily infirmity on them, restrained their unlawful desires, and made them sensible she was a married woman. The king took the hint, and calling for Abram, blamed him for deceiving him, which might have led him into a fatal error; for not knowing her to be a married woman, he might have taken her to his own bed.\* Then, in much displeasure, he bids him take his wife and depart, commanding his servants neither to injure him in his person or his property, but permit him quietly to remove with all his substance, which was much improved during his stay in Egypt by the favour of the King, for he was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold.

Hitherto his nephew Lot continued with him, whose stock increased proportionably with that of his uncle Abram. Leaving Egypt together they proceeded towards Canaan again, and arrived at Bethel, the place where Abram had built an altar to the Lord, before he went into Egypt, and there he worshipped God again.

And now their families growing large, and their flocks increasing, they began to labour again under a scarcity of pasture for their cattle; which might probably proceed partly from the late famine there, and partly from the great number of Canaanites and Perizzites that possessed the most fruitful part of the country. This scarcity of provisions and pasturage occasioned some petty quarrels between the herdsmen of Abram and of Lot, which gave Abram some uneasiness; who fearing that this contention among the servants, if not timely suppressed, might rise higher, to the endangering of a breach betwixt his kinsman and himself, took an opportunity to speak to his nephew Lot about it; and in soft and gentle terms said to him, "Let there be no dispute between us, nor our servants; for we are

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\* Though Sarai was, in a certain sense, the sister of Abram, (see Gen. xx. 12.) yet this was certainly a blameable equivocation, occasioned by a distrust of God's protection, and exposed her to the very danger he wished to avoid. It shows the imperfection of the best human characters, and is not recorded for our imitation.

“brethren.”\* Abram therefore to prevent the worst, wisely proposes parting, seeing it scarcely probable, that since their substance was grown so great, they should with the same conveniency and accommodation dwell any longer together. And though Abram was, in all respects, a greater and better man than Lot, yet to shew his prudence, (not meanness of Spirit,) he condescends to give his nephew Lot his choice of settlement, in what part of the land he liked best, and himself would take what he refused. Lot readily closed with this advantageous proposal; for having before surveyed the country, he chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, which he had observed to be very fertile and well watered. Thus having parted by agreement, Lot directs his course eastward, and settles in the plain of Jordan, pitching his tent towards Sodom: the inhabitants of which place exceeded, in that age, the worst of sinners. Lot having removed, Abram still continued in the land of Canaan, where God renewed to him the grant of that land, and to his seed for ever. This grant, as penned by the direction of God himself, stands thus enrolled in the sacred record: “Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, Northward, Southward, Eastward, and Westward; for all the land which thou seest will I give unto thee, and to thy seed for ever: and I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed be numbered. Arise, walk through the land, in the length and breadth thereof; for I will give it unto thee.” Hereupon Abram removing his tent, went and dwelt at the Oak† of Mamre, which is in Hebron; and there he built an altar unto the Lord.

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\* *Brethren.* So the ancients reputed and called those that sprang from one common root, though not in a direct line from one and the same father; In which respect those were brethren in a natural relation; as with regard to religion, and the worship of the true God, they were brethren also in a spiritual relation: in both which respects they would have suffered, had not the contention been timely suppressed.

† *Oak.* Sazomen writes, that this oak was still famous in the time of Constantine for pilgrimages, and for an anniversary feast which was solemnized

In a short time after, happened that memorable battle fought by four kings against five ; the first pitched battle we read of in sacred history. The occasion of which was this ; Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, had held five petty kings in a tributary subjection to him for some years ; of which number the king of Sodom was one. At length they confederated against him : Whereupon he, with three other kings, made war upon them to reduce them to their former subjection. The tributary kings resolved to try their fate in a pitched battle, and were defeated. The vale of Siddim, where the battle was fought, had in it many pits, out of which had been dug slime, (a kind of clammy earth, called Bitumen, useful for making mortar,) and here the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, in their flight, are said to have fallen. But whether, being pursued among those pits, they were overtaken and slain, or whether taking shelter there, they hid and secured themselves till the pursuit was over, is not expressed. However, after the rout, the conquerors plundered the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, carried away all the goods and provisions, and made the inhabitants prisoners ; Among whom was Abram's nephew Lot, who by this time was become an inhabitant of Sodom, though upon his parting with his uncle we left him only pitching his tent towards Sodom ; but now he was gone to dwell in Sodom, and with the Sodomites was taken prisoner.

But some made their escape ; one of whom came and brought the news of this defeat to Abram, who remained still near the oak that belonged to Mamre, with his two brothers Escol and Aner, who were in confederacy with him. Abram in haste musters up what force he could to rescue his kinsman ; and choosing among his own servants, such as were fit to bear arms, to the number of

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there : That it was distant from Hebron but six miles, where there were still to be seen some cottages which Abraham had built near that oak, and a well which he had digged ; and whither the Jews, Pagans, and Christians, travelled every year, either out of devotion or a design to trade. Brochard assures us, that he had seen this oak, and had carried home some of the fruit and wood of it.

three hundred and eighteen, accompanied by his confederates,\* he pursues the enemy as far as Dan. The night favouring his design, he divides his forces into small parties, and attacks them on all sides. The unexpectedness of this sudden attempt upon a victorious army, laden with spoil, and the midnight alarm, struck them with such horror and amazement, that Abram obtained a sudden and easy victory. Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, fell in the action; and their whole army was routed, which they drove as far as Hoba, which is on the left of Damascus. Thus Abram rescued his nephew Lot, with all the prisoners, and retook all the booty.

The first person who congratulated him upon his victory was the king of Sodom,† who, in thankful acknowledgment of the benefit he had received from Abram's assistance and courage, offered him the goods which he had retaken, desiring him only to restore the prisoners. Abram was not so sordid as to take advantage of the miseries of war; for reserving to his confederates that part of the plunder which by the rules of war belonged to them, he restored to the King of Sodom both the prisoners and the goods, having before resolved not to keep any part of them, that it might be known he undertook the enterprize only for the public benefit, which all men of honour and piety ought to support. ✕

The next who congratulated Abram upon his success, was Melchizedeck,‡ king of Salem, who, meeting him in

\* *Confederates.* See Gen. xiv. 13. and v. 24.

† *Sodom.* By this it seems, Gen. xiv. 17. the king of Sodom was not slain at the battle of the kings aforesaid. For the text saying only that the king of Sodom came out to meet him, it may reasonably be supposed he came from some place where he had hid himself, or from Sodom, whither, after the conqueror had withdrawn, he might return.

‡ *Melchizedeck.* There have been great disputes among the learned who this Melchizedeck was, and where this city Salem stood. And that which hath still aggravated the difference, is the description of him in Heb. vii. 3. where it is said, that "Melchizedeck was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life." These words have occasioned many wild and whimsical speculations. But among all the opinions about him, that



his return from the battle, brought him a present of bread and wine, to refresh him and his men on their march; and both blessed Abram and God too, who had given him good success. In requital of which kindness, Abram made him a present of the tenth part of the spoils he had taken in the expedition.

Notwithstanding this victory over the Kings, Abram, considering himself merely as a stranger in that country, might be apprehensive that the Babylonians, whom he had lately defeated, to repair their loss might meditate a revenge; therefore to remove any anxiety of mind, that might proceed from temporal causes, God encourages him, saying, "Fear not, Abram, for I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

Though this providential care of the Almighty was a seasonable hint to Abram, to remind him of the promise,

of Epiphanius, and others, as to his person, is very probable; who think that he was a Sidonian, which they seem to take out of Josephus, who calls him a prince of the Canaanites. But we may observe, that the apostle does not describe him by those qualities with respect to his person, but to his office or dignity of priesthood, which made him like Jesus Christ: And on that account, it is enough that his genealogy, birth and death, are not recorded in scripture, to justify this description. But since it is usual in the best authors to describe famous nations and persons, as if they had produced themselves, it is more natural to have recourse to this custom. History speaks of several people who had no original: The Italians about Rome were called Aborigines; the Athenians called themselves Autocthonous: and Seneca, speaking of two Kings of the Romans, Ancus and Servius, says, The first had no father, and the second no mother. After all, if it be true that Melchizedeck was descended of wicked and idolatrous parents, as most of the fathers think, and that he was the first and last priest of the true God, of his race, the Apostle might, in the epistle to the Hebrews, very well describe him under those characters in ver. 3. And since our language is not so metaphorical as the dead languages, we should follow in a popular version the meaning which we have observed, and translate with Outram the text, Heb. vii. 3. That Melchizedeck was the most illustrious of his family, and had neither predecessor nor successor in his employ. He was an eminent type of Christ, who is both the "King of Righteousness," and "King of Peace;" who is in the highest sense, "Priest of the high God," who blesseth all the faithful; who receiveth the homage of his people; and who was truly without progenitors or successors, with respect to his office.

that his issue should inherit the land ; yet he had not been pleased hitherto to bestow any heir upon him ; but his servant seemed likely to inherit his estate. Whereupon, God, to satisfy him, tells him, that not his servant, but one that should come out of his own bowels should be his heir ; and that he should not only have an heir of his own body but a numerous offspring, like the stars of heaven for number. But Abram desiring some assurance of these things, God gratified him, making a covenant with him by express promise, attended with a very solemn ceremony, after this manner : “ Take (saith God) an heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon.” Abram obeyed, and dividing the beasts, but not the birds, laid each piece one against the other ; and when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, he drove them away. About sun-set a deep sleep seized upon Abram, which affected him with horror.\* But God spoke to him, saying, “ Know for certain, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, who shall afflict them four hundred years : But that nation which shall afflict them will I judge ; and afterwards shall they come forth with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace ; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again : For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.” And for a similar demonstration how this should come to pass, the Lord caused two emblems of all this to appear ; first a smoking furnace, (a plain representation of the heavy sufferings his seed should undergo in Egypt,) and a lamp of fire, (a lively emblem of their deliverance after the ex-

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\* *An horror of great darkness fell upon him.*—Abram seems to have employed the whole day in watching, fasting, and prayer, till the stars appeared, and this horror, with darkness of mind, was strongly expressive and emblematical of what his posterity was doomed to undergo in Egypt.—Four hundred years intervened from this time to their deliverance by the Almighty, and four hundred and thirty years from the first call of Abram, according to the united testimony of the best commentators.

piration of their four hundred years servitude:)\* These passed between the divided pieces of flesh.

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18 / Sarai having for about ten years expected a performance of God's promise, and judging according to the course of nature, that the promised heir must proceed from some other, and not from herself, now despairing of her own conception, partly from her great age, which was seventy-five, and partly from a sense she had that God had restrained her from bearing, prevailed† upon her husband to take her handmaid Hagar‡ to be his concubinary§ wife, pleasing herself with the thought, that if her maid should conceive by her husband, it would be a means of building up her and her house, in the accomplishment of the Divine Promise.

Hagar soon conceived by her Master Abram; and forgetting her former condition of a slave, values herself upon her conception, and treats her mistress with contempt. Sarai, who had been the cause of this Egyptian's advancement, is stung to the quick at her scornful carriage, which not being able to endure, she complains to her husband; hinting as if Hagar durst not have been so impertinent without some encouragement from him, and expostulates with him very sharply about the matter. But Abram to convince Sarai that he would not countenance her

\* Gen. xv. 17.

† *Prevailed.* This shews the singular chastity of Abram, Gen. xvi. 2. who could not without the importunity of his wife, be persuaded to take their servant to his bed.

‡ *Hagar.* She is supposed by St. Chrysostom to have been given by Pharaoh to Abram, whilst he sojourned in Egypt, and was by the pious example of her master and mistress converted to the faith and worship of the true God.

§ *Concubinary.* In concubinage, those secondary or half wives, were accounted lawful and true wives, and their issue reputed legitimate, and they had a lawful right to the marriage bed. Yet in all other respects they were inferior. And as they had no authority in the family, nor share in the household government; so if they had been servants in the family before they came to be concubines, they continued to be so afterwards, and in the same subjection to their mistress as before.

in any disrespectful behaviour towards her, delivers Hagar into her power as her mistress, bidding her do as she pleased with her. Sarai, no doubt, shewed her resentment in some severity which we find not particularly expressed: However, it was such, it seems, that Hagar's proud mind could not bear; for she ran away immediately, making the best of her way towards her own country, which was Egypt. As she travelled through the desert, finding a fountain of water, she tarried to rest and refresh herself. Here the Angel of the Lord found her; and in his first address, put her in mind of her relation and duty, giving her the appellation of Sarai's servant; plainly denoting that her advancement to her master's bed had not exempted her from her mistress's service. Then expostulating with her about her intended journey, whither she would go? She answered, that she fled from her mistress. The Angel enquired no farther; but bid her return, and submit herself to her. And the more effectually to persuade her to a thing so much against her inclination, he told her that God would multiply\* her seed exceedingly, so that it should not be numbered; and to convince her that he was a messenger sent on purpose from God to take care of her, he told her that which none else could, namely, that she was with child and should bear a *son*, giving her a particular charge about the name she should give him, which was Ishmael.

Hagar having been brought up in Abram's family, was no doubt instructed in the knowledge and fear of the true God, which is plain from her acknowledging that it was God who had visited her: The fountain also, at which the angel found her, was called Beer-lahai-roi, that is "The well of him that liveth and seeth me." And now having in so extraordinary a manner been comforted and admonished, she returned to her mistress, and being upon her submission received, she in due time was delivered of a son, whom Abram, according to the angel's direction, called Ishmael.

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\* Gen. xvi. 10.



At the birth of this child Abram was eighty-six years old; and lest, in the excess of his joy, he should mistake this child for the heir of those great promises before made to him, God, for a further trial of his faith and obedience, deferred yet thirteen years longer that blessing which should be granted him; for in the ninety-ninth year of Abram, God appeared to him again, and said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, be thou perfect, and I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." Abram, in humble reverence falling on his face, God talked farther with him, and, for an additional confirmation of his faith, told him he should be a father of many nations, changing his name from Abram\* to Abraham. At the same time God instituted circumcision, as a seal of the covenant which he now made with him, commanding that every male-child of eight days old, whether born in the house, or bought with money, should be circumcised in the foreskin of his flesh, upon pain of being cut off from his people.† Whereupon Abraham and Ishmael, and all the men of his family, were circumcised the same day. And as God had changed Abram's name to that of Abraham, so did he at the same time change his wife's name from Sarai‡ to Sarah, the dif-

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\* *Abram.* This name imported a *High Father*, but his new name Abraham signifies a *Father of a great Multitude*: As indeed he was; not only the Twelve Tribes but the Ishmaelites, the Edomites, and all the posterity of Keturah, descending from him.

† Circumcision had probably a much earlier origin, as it is observed by nations who cannot be supposed to have received it from Abram or his descendants; it was perhaps instituted soon after the fall, and included a *memento* of the first transgression of Adam, in which, no doubt, too fond a regard to sensual gratification had a share; it is easy therefore to see the symbolical meaning of this rite.— "A heart circumcised,"— "a heart cut off, and separated from unruly passions and sensual affections." This was therefore made the token of God's Covenant with Israel, who were to be a holy people, not under the dominion of fleshly lusts like their idolatrous neighbours.

‡ *Sarai.* Sarai signified *My Princess*, Princess of my family only; but Sarah signifies a *Princess* indefinitely, at large. "A Mother (or Princess) of many nations shall she be, and Kings of People shall come of her," Gen. xvii. 16.

ference in sound but little, but great in meaning. And now at the changing of their names, God promised a son to Abraham, by his wife Sarah. "I will bless her, (said he,) "and give thee a son also of her." This was joyful news indeed to Abraham, who did not in the least question the performance of it; but considering that he was at present a real father in Ishmael, the natural affection he bore to him, as his first begotten, and fear that upon the birth of another he might be deprived of him, made him break forth into this earnest supplication, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" God soon dispels these anxieties; and to wean him from his desire of advancing Ishmael to any share in the covenant, assures him that Sarah should bear a son whose name he should call Isaac; promising to establish his covenant with him for ever, and with his seed after him. At the same time, that he might not seem wholly to reject Abraham's request for Ishmael, he adds, "As for Ishmael, I have heard thy prayer, and have blessed him; he shall be fruitful, and multiply so exceedingly, that he shall beget twelve Princes, and I will make him a great nation." And to remove any further doubt or scruple of the performance of these promises, God appoints a set time, telling him that Sarah should bring forth a son, the next year.\* To assure him still further of this, in a short time after God appears to him in another manner, to confirm him in the truth of what he had told him: For as Abraham one day sat in his tent-door, in the oak-grove, he saw three persons, whom he took for men, coming towards him; whereupon, rising from his seat, he went to meet them, and after the custom of the country, saluted them by bowing himself to the ground. Still supposing them to be men, he is very importunate with them to stay, and take a repast with him. They readily consented, and he immediately gave orders for an entertainment, which was accordingly served up, and himself waited at the table, which was under the covert of a shady oak. During their seeming refreshment, one of them asked him where his wife was; and Abraham telling him she was in the tent, he said,

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\* See Gen. xvii. 21. and xxi. 2.

“ I will certainly return to thee according to the time that women usually go with child, and Sarah thy wife shall have a son.” By which Abraham was once more assured that this visit was from Heaven, and that one of them represented God himself. Sarah over-heard all that passed in this conversation; and considering her own and husband’s great age, she could not believe what was said, having still a greater regard to the order of nature than to God’s promise, but laughed within herself at the improbability of the matter. For which being reproved by one of their heavenly guests, though she knew herself guilty, she denied that she laughed. But the Lord positively fixed it upon her, saying, “ Nay, but thou didst laugh.”\*

Upon this, the conversation ceased, and the company prepared to be gone, having first assured Abraham of God’s return at the promised time; and he understanding they were travelling towards Sodom, would needs wait on them, and bring them on their way. As they walked, God was pleased to give a singular instance of his favour to Abraham, in acquainting him with his purpose concerning Sodom; which gracious act was grounded upon the assurance he had, that Abraham would command † not only his children, but his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. Upon which, God acquaints him with his design to destroy ‡ Sodom; in the mean time the

\* *Laugh.* This shews how piercing the eye of Providence is, from which no secret can be hid. She thought none could discover her inclinations or inward actions; and because she did not laugh outwardly, she therefore persisted in the denial. Her only excuse could be, that her laughter proceeded from incredulity and not from contempt. And yet there is a great difference between Abraham’s laughing and Sarah’s, though much on the same occasion: For Abraham, when the promise of a son by Sarah was made to him, Gen. xvii. 17. laughed for joy, and was not reproved.

† *Command.* See Gen. xviii. 19.

‡ *Destroy.* Here is another great instance of God’s patience, who, though he knew all without enquiry, yet would not condemn even the most flagitious without due examination and trial. Before the flood, God proceeded against the old world upon ocular evidence: “ God saw that the wickedness

two angels left them, and went towards Sodom; but Abraham remained communing with the Lord,\* and interceding for that wicked city, which this great condescension of the Lord in communicating his purpose to Abraham, gave him opportunity to do. Taking for granted, therefore, that God, the Judge of all the earth, must do right, he proceeded to mediate for Sodom in six petitionary propositions, lessening the number from fifty to ten; praying that in case there were but ten just persons in Sodom, he would not destroy it for their sake. This, God, at the patriarch's intreaty, was graciously pleased to grant; and then left Abraham to return home.

The other two guests, who came along with them from Abraham's tent, (and who were indeed ministering angels, whom God had appointed† to execute judgment upon the wicked Sodomites,) held on their course towards the city, where they arrived in the evening. Lot, who sat in the gate of the city, seeing them, went forth to meet them, and having saluted them, invited them to his house to refresh and repose themselves that night; which they at first declined, but by his importunity were prevailed upon to accept. During their entertainment, the men of Sodom in a very riotous manner encompassed the house, and commanded Lot to bring forth his new guests, that they

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of man was great, Gen. vi. 5, and 12. So also at the building of Babel, it is said, "The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men built," Gen. xi. 5. And now again, before the destruction of Sodom, though the cry against Sodom and Gomorrah was great, because of the grievousness of their sin, yet the Lord would not proceed against them upon generals, or upon common fame, but "I will go down, (saith the Lord) and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it: and if not I will know." Gen. xviii. 21.

\* The text says, "Abraham stood yet before the LORD," (Jehovah) Gen. xviii. 22, and Abraham addressed him as "The Judge of all the earth," ver. 25, so that this was another condescending visit of HIM, who afterwards was "made flesh and dwelt among us." John, i. 14.

† Appointed. See Gen. xix. 19.



might know\* them. Lot, thinking by mild and gentle words to appease his unreasonable neighbours, steps out of the door, and shutting it after him, intreats them not to offer any affront to his guests. So great, indeed, was his concern for their safety, that he made an unwary and unwarrantable offer to the Sodomites, to bring out his two virgin daughters to them, to do with them as they pleased, rather than they should abuse his guests : Which, though an error in the good man, yet shews how sacred the laws of hospitality were then held among the virtuous. But the Sodomites, naturally wicked, and, in order to their destruction, become extremely hardened, scorned to be directed by him, who was but a late inhabitant among them, and threatened to deal worse with him than with his guests ; and pressing hard upon Lot, they intended to force the door. The heavenly guests seeing Lot in such dangerous circumstances, engaged in the quarrel ; drew him into the house, and struck these unnatural monsters with blindness, which so perplexed them that they could not find the door : Which being again shut, they inquired of Lot what family he had ; and informing him that the destruction of the place was now determined, and that God had sent them to destroy it, they charged him to take all his family and relations, with whatsoever he had in that place, and bring them out.

Upon this admonition, Lot went out, and spake to those that were to marry† his daughters, and advised them to

\* *Know them.* That is, abuse them in that unnatural and filthy manner which was afterwards expressly forbidden in the Law, Levit. xviii. 22. and thereby made capital, chap. xx. 13. Which vile sin continued among the Gentiles, even to the Apostle's time, (as may be gathered from Rom. i. 27, and 1 Cor. vi. 9.) and was so generally practised amongst the people of Sodom, that from thence it took the name of Sodomy, and the practisers thereof are called Sodomites, both in the Scriptures, (1 Kings, xiv. 24, and xv. 12. 2 Kings, xxiii. 7,) and our English laws, which (as did the law of God of old) still make the punishment of it death.

† *Marry, &c.* Some translators render it, "Which were to marry his daughters." It is very probable they were contracted or betrothed to husbands ; but the marriage was not solemnized.

accompany him, that they might avoid the common destruction: but to little purpose, for they considered all he said as a jest. By this time the night was far spent; and as soon as the day began to break, the angels hastened Lot to be gone, saying, "Arise, take thy wife and thy two daughters, lest ye be destroyed in the iniquity of the city." Lot was still for delaying, perhaps hoping that the fate of this wretched people might be reversed. But in vain; instead of ten righteous persons that Abraham capitulated for, but four, and they of Lot's family, (including himself,) were thought worthy to escape the dreadful judgment designed for this place. The angels therefore observing that lot still lingered, took him, his wife and daughters, by force, and brought them out of the city, bidding them hasten for their lives, and charging them not to look behind them, nor make any stay in the plain, but to escape to the mountain, lest they shared in the common fate. Lot looking forward and seeing the mountain was far distant, intreated the Angels that he might be excused from flying so far, and be permitted only to go to a small city hard by, which was then called Bela.\* They granted his request, and that city being saved for his sake, he was commanded to hasten thither; for, said the Angel, I will not do any thing towards the destruction of Sodom and the other cities till thou be secured.

The injunction laid on Lot, his wife, and daughters upon their escape was, that they should not look behind them, nor tarry in the plain, but hasten to the mountain. Yet before Lot could reach the city of Bela, afterwards called Zoar, his wife, either forgetting what the Angel had said, or out of love to the place of her habitation,

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\* *Bela*. This city was the seat of one of those five kings, who fought the first battle with the four kings, and were beaten in the vale of Siddim, Gen. xiv. 2.

looked back,\* and became a pillar of mineral salt,† a lasting monument of God's vengeance on obstinate and unbelieving offenders.

Lot's Wife being thus made a dreadful example of attachment to what God had forbidden, he with his daughters proceeds in his flight to Zoar, where he arrived by sun-rise. And now being out of danger, God prepares his judgments against Sodom and Gomorrah, and the rest of the sinful cities of the plain: The angry heavens pour down showers of liquid fire, which in an instant destroyed those guilty wretches. Lot‡ seeing that other

\* *Looked back.* She stopped by the way, and left her husband and daughters to go by themselves. When she looked back, Sodom, and the fine country around it, appeared in the same pleasant and serene state as ever.—Consequently, she looked with a look of affection to the place, and of regret to leave it, and their goods that were in it, according to the import of the verb צָבַח—This implied unbelief and distrust of what the angels had affirmed, that God would immediately destroy the place. She did not believe, or she did not regard it.—She would go no further, and might be at a considerable distance from Zoar, and so near to Sodom, as probably to be involved in the terrible shower. This gives the proper sense and force to our Lord's admonition, Luke xvii. 32. “Remember Lot's wife.”—Let the judgment of God upon her warn you of the folly and danger of hankering after, and being loth to part with small and temporal things, when your life and happiness, the greatest and most lasting concerns, are at stake.

† *Salt.* All the versions say that Lot's wife became a pillar of salt. Gen. xix. 26. Josephus assures us, that it was to be seen in his time, and several modern travellers relate that it is still to be seen between Mount Engaddi and the Dead Sea. Interpreters observe, that we must not take the salt here mentioned for common salt, but a mineral salt, which was hewn out of the rock like marble, and was made use of to build houses, according to the testimony of several eminent authors. But since by the word salt, we always understand common salt, which water soon dissolves, the word *mineral* should have been joined with *salt* in the version, to take away the ambiguity. This made Vatablus and Bodinus take this expression in a metaphorical sense, as a firm and sure covenant is called a “Covenant of Salt,” Num. xviii. 19. 2 Chr. xiii. 5.

‡ *Lot.* God's favour in preserving Lot, was very great: But yet it is not altogether to be imputed to Lot's piety; for we consider that Lot was very near of kin to Abraham, and very much esteemed by him, and no doubt Lot fared



cities of the plain besides Sodom were demolished, thinking himself not safe in Zoar, withdrew to the mountain to which he was first directed, and there dwelt in a cave with his two daughters, where the greatest of mischiefs befell him, no less than that of incest; for his two daughters having lost their espoused husbands in Sodom, and despairing of ever having any others, (for they thought all mankind were destroyed in the late conflagration, except their father and themselves,) plotted together to betray their innocent parent, under the pretence of preserving the race of mankind. They had lived in Sodom, and it may be feared, had learned too much of the licentiousness of the place. However they might be instigated, it is certain they had a very unnatural design upon their father; and considering his integrity, they knew they could not persuade him to commit so great a wickedness while he retained his reason; they therefore determined to deprive him of it, by intoxication. In this base project they succeeded too well; in consequence of which, Lot became both the father and grandfather of his daughters' children; but, as if he abhorred this incestuous breed, we do not find that he took so much notice of them as to give them a name; for the mothers named them, the elder calling her son Moab, and the younger her son Ben-ammi; both mischievous enemies in after-times to Israel, especially the Moabites. Thus much of Lot, of whom sacred History gives no further account.

Return we now to Abraham, who abode at Mamre till he had seen the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; soon after which he removed more southward, and fixed in Gerar, the chief city of the Philistines. Here again the same apprehension possessed him about Sarah his wife, as before, and therefore he had recourse to his former policy, and by agreement they were to call each

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the better for Abraham's sake; for it is said, Gen. xix. 29. "When God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the destruction," &c.



other brother and sister. The King\* of Gerar supposing Sarah to be no other than Abraham's sister, caused her to be taken from him, intending to keep† her for himself. But God appeared to that Prince in a dream, and told him he should be punished with death for the woman he had taken, because she had a husband.‡ Abimelech excused himself, alledging that Sarah and Abraham had given out that they were brother and sister. And calling for Abraham, he reproves him sharply; demanding why he imposed so on him, who never offered any ill to him, but rather did him all the kind offices of a friend? Abraham's excuse was, that he did it to save his life; though at the same time he told him no lie in saying she was his sister, for she was the daughter of his father but not of his mother. Abimelech thus admonished by God, was easily reconciled; for he not only restored Abraham his wife with a royal present, and permission to dwell in what part of the country he liked best, but paid an extraordinary compliment to Sarah in these words, "Behold I have given to thy brother a thousand pieces of silver, which is to thee a covering of the eyes to all that are with thee, and to all others, for thou art fully justified."§

\* *King.* The King of Gerar's title was Abimelech, as that of the Kings of Egypt was Pharaoh, and that of the Roman Emperors Cæsar.

† *Keep.* Sarah was now ninety years old when Abimelech took her into his family; whence it may seem very strange, that a woman of her age should bear her years so well as to be desired by a King, who in those times might command the most youthful beauties in his dominions. But according to interpreters and commentators, people of ninety in those days, were as fresh and vigorous as those of forty now. Others, as Procop. are of opinion that God having removed Sarah's barrenness, her beauty returned with her fruitfulness: for by this time it may be supposed that Sarah had conceived that promised seed which was to be Abraham's heir.

‡ The Psalmist, referring to this event says, "He suffered no man to do him wrong; yea he reprov'd kings for his sake." Ps. cv. 14.

§ *Justified.* The translation of this passage in our version is not strictly accurate. "Behold I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: Behold he is to thee a covering of the eyes to all that are with thee, and with all others. Thus was she reprov'd." Gen. xx. 16. For, first, The word which they

Then, upon Abraham's prayer, God removed from Abimelech that disability by which he had restrained him from Sarah; and also restored to his wife and women their former fertility, which had been suspended.

And now the time appointed being come, God gave a miraculous instance of his power and faithfulness in blessing Abraham with a son, whose birth was wonderful, considering the age of his parents. Sarah was delivered of a child, whom Abraham, according to former direction, called Isaac,\* and circumcised him when he was eight days old. Who can express the joy of this ancient pair on this occasion? Now indeed might Sarah laugh with comfort, not in distrust, as she did before.

The birth of Isaac, as it was matter of great joy to Sarah, was, no doubt, a great disappointment to Hagar, who, from her mistress's great age, might naturally conclude she would have no child, and therefore promised herself the satisfaction that her son should be Abraham's heir.

render *reproved* never has that meaning, but signifies to search or enquire into a thing till it is cleared and put out of doubt. Secondly, There was no need then for a reproof; for Abraham had already fully justified Sarah, v. 12. and Abimelech had accepted of his defence. Thirdly, Abimelech was so far from irritating Abraham or Sarah by reproaches, that on the contrary he endeavoured to win their friendship by a very considerable present: Nay, before Abimelech was satisfied, his reproaches to Abraham were rather obliging remonstrances than bitter invectives, v. 9, 10. He therefore declares that Sarah was fully justified, as the Septuagint and Chaldee paraphrase have rendered it.

But there is another mistake; for it is of Abraham that it says, "He was a covering to the eyes of Sarah;" whereas the original says this of the thousand pieces of silver, which were a public testimony that Abimelech rendered to her virtue, as the veils of the Hebrew women were the symbols of their modesty, whereas the harlots went open-faced. So that this present rather regarded Sarah than Abraham, to whom that prince had already given sheep and oxen, &c. and restored him Sarah his wife, giving him likewise an offer of settling in any part of his country. Abimelech's design then by this liberality was to justify Sarah's virtue to them who belonged to her, and to all others, it being at that time usual to give presents to confirm the truth of any thing that might be called in doubt, as may be seen, Gen. xxi. 30.

\* Isaac: Which signifies Laughter.

This disappointment soon grew to a resentment, which could not long be concealed in mother or son; for after Isaac was weaned and grown up a little, his watchful mother caught Ishmael mocking\* him. Sarah could by no means bear to have her son derided by the son of a bond-woman; she was therefore very importunate with Abraham to dismiss both mother and son, hinting to him that *her* son was to be the heir of the covenant, not the son of a slave. This brought Abraham into a painful dilemma: He was fond of Ishmael, whose infant familiarity had very much engaged him to the child. But God, who always had a great regard to Abraham's happiness and welfare, soon made it easy to him; bidding him not to be solicitous about the bond-woman and her son, but to regard what his wife advised him to, confirming what she said, that Isaac was to be his heir; assuring him at the same time, that because Ishmael was his son he would make him considerable in the world. †

Once more Hagar turns wanderer, but it is by compulsion: The Lord will have it so, and Abraham must obey. His fondness for Ishmael yielded to God's promises, which were his only comfort at this sad separation. All her equipment of provision was some bread and a bottle of water, with which she sets out, wandering in the wilderness of Beersheba till her water was spent, and in vain searching for a supply in that parched country, she in despair lays the child, fainting with thirst, at the foot of a tree, herself retiring a little distance from him, that she

\* *Mocking.* It is reasonable to suppose that this mocking might be upon the account of the heirship, Ishmael scorning that this youngster, so much his inferior in years, should take the inheritance from him; and so upon this derided him: And that Hagar, Ishmael's mother, did countenance him, if not tutor him to it. For she was to be cast out as well as he; which it is probable, would not have been the case, if she had not been faulty. This may reasonably be supposed from her former deportment upon her conceiving Ishmael, when she carried herself very haughtily to her mistress.

† St. Paul treats this history allegorically in Gal. iv. 22. and says, "As then he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now."



might not see him die. In vain his feeble tongue calls on his mourning mother who can only answer him with tears; they weep, and alternately echo their sad distress to one another. But the boundless pity which alone can help when all human means fail, bids the weeping mother dry up her tears, and fear no more; for He had heard her prayers, and would make her child the father of a mighty people. Hagar looking about, found a well of water, and gave the child drink, which refreshed him, God afterwards providing for him; and here they both took up their abode, in the wilderness of Paran, where Ishmael became an expert archer, by which employment it is probable he obtained provisions to sustain his mother and himself. And when he had arrived at man's estate, his mother, being herself an Egyptian, took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

Abraham being so kindly treated by Abimelech, and invited to dwell in his country, accepts his offer; and the former, observing how visibly God blessed Abraham in all his undertakings, and that he grew very powerful, took Phicol the general of his forces, and made a league with him, fearing lest, as Abraham became more powerful, he might attempt something in prejudice of him or his successors in the government. This league thus made, and confirmed by an oath between them, and a little difference composed about a well of water which Abraham had digged, and Abimelech's servants without their master's knowledge had forcibly seized, but now upon Abraham's complaint restored, Abraham made a present to Abimelech of some sheep and oxen, who with his general Phicol took leave and returned. But Abraham, intending to settle for some time in that country, planted a grove\* in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.

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\* *Grove.* It is probable that from the earliest times *Trees* or *Groves* were held sacred, and had some emblematical design, relative to worship. Perhaps they were of the same nature as the *Holy Places* we afterwards read of, and which were no longer proper, when the only altar allowed to the Jews was fixed at Jerusalem.



Among all the circumstances and trials of Abraham's faith and obedience, the greatest that ever he experienced, was that of being commanded to sacrifice his son Isaac. Ishmael, once the delight of his heart, and joy of his declining age, is now no more to him, being obliged by the divine mandate to banish him from home, and Isaac, the son of his joy, whom he so dearly loved, who had been conceived beyond the course of nature, and in whom God had promised that all the nations of the earth should be blessed, must bleed by the appointment of the Almighty. This was a severe trial to human nature: but God's command made it easy. Abraham neither disputes nor delays; but early in the morning set forward on his journey, accompanied only by his son Isaac, and attended with two servants, who led an ass that carried the wood, and other instruments for the sacrifice, as well as provisions for themselves, having three days journey to go, as far as the land of Moriah.\* On the third day they came within sight of the place; when

As the Groves were abused for the purposes of superstition and idolatry, the Israelites were commanded to destroy their altars, break down their images, and cut down their groves, Exod. xxxiv. 13. and to burn them with fire, Deut. xii. 3. They were forbidden also to plant any themselves to perform their devotions in, Deut. xvi. 21. And when the kings of Israel departed from God, they set up groves; and it was one of Ahab's provoking sins that he made a grove, 1 Kings xvi. 33. But in the patriarchal age, Sacred Trees and Groves might be lawful; and the object of Abraham's worship was Jehovah, the everlasting God. Let us, wherever we sojourn, take care to acknowledge and worship the Lord.

\* *Moriab*. That is, *The fear of the Lord*. This is the place where Jerusalem afterwards stood: for Mount Moriah, where Abraham was to offer his son, is by some thought to be Mount Sion, on which Solomon built the Temple, where God commanded the offerings to be made, 2 Chron. iii. v. 1.

From this time the place obtained a new name—"JEHOVAH JIREH—*The Lord will be seen*:" alluding to what Abraham had said to his son—"Jehovah Jireh"—"*the Lord will provide,—or see to it.*" He now prophetically calls the place by this name, for here indeed—The Lord was seen; here the Son of God, the Lord from heaven did appear, and die as an atonement for the sins of the world.

Abraham ordered his servants to stop,\* telling them that he and his son would go and worship, and come back to them again. The pious youth, ignorant of what his father intended to do with him, goes on cheerfully; and the faithful Patriarch, having by the strength of his dependance† on God's promises overcome those pangs of natural affection, which otherwise might have made him hesitate in the performance of this severe duty, went on with a resolution answerable to his faith and obedience. Thus they walked together; but Isaac, who saw the wood and instruments provided for the sacrifice, and no lamb for a burnt offering, innocently asked his father where he would procure a lamb? To which the father prophetically replied, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." Abraham, being come to the place God had appointed, built an altar, and having laid the wood in order, bound his son Isaac, and laid him upon the wood on the altar. Isaac, being at that time at least twenty-five years of age, (though he was then called lad and child,) was capable of making resistance; but whether being by his father made acquainted with God's command, or being naturally subject and obedient to his parents, he quietly submitted, yielding implicitly to his father's directions.

All things being thus prepared, Abraham stretched forth his hand to give the fatal stroke; when Heaven, regarding the father's piety, and the son's obedience, timely interposes, and, with a reduplication of his name, charges

\* *Stop.* Probably to prevent any disturbance the servants by their tenderness might give him, if they should see him about to sacrifice his son.

† *Dependance.* From what the apostle says, Heb. xi. 19. may be gathered, that Abraham had so steady a faith in God's omnipotence, that though he neither knew nor expected any other but that Isaac should certainly be sacrificed; yet he believed that God, who had so miraculously given him, and promised to make him "the father of many nations," would, to make his promise good, restore him to life again; "accounting," saith St. Paul, "that God was able to raise him up from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure, that is, in a figure or resemblance of the resurrection from the dead."

him not to hurt the youth, adding this divine applause of his faith, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." Abraham, not a little surprised at the voice, turns about to see whence it came, and spies a ram caught in a thicket by the horns, which he immediately took and offered for a burnt offering instead of his son: A happy exchange! Upon this complete obedience of Abraham, it pleased the Lord to renew his promise to him with great amplifications, and confirm it to him by oath.\* Whereupon Abraham returning with his son Isaac to his servants, they joyfully repair to Beersheba, at that time the place of Abraham's residence; where he is no sooner arrived, but he is welcomed home with the happy news of the increase of his family; for Milcha, the wife of his brother Nahor, had made him the glad father of eight children, among whom was Bethuel, the father of Rebecca, who was afterwards wife to Isaac.

It is not certainly known how long Abraham abode at Beersheba; but the next place where we hear of him was at Kirjath-arba, afterwards called Hebron, in the country of Canaan; where he buried his wife Sarah in the hundred and twenty-seventh year of her age. Having observed the usual ceremony of mourning, he addressed himself to the Hittites,† desiring a burying place for his dead. They, not understanding his meaning, replied,

\* *Oath.* St. Paul refers to this circumstance, Heb. vi. 13, &c. where addressing sincere believers, he comforts them with a view of the goodness of God, and his fidelity to those sacred engagements into which he had condescended to enter. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, (as men usually do) he swore by himself, saying, Surely, blessing I will bless thee," &c. He observes that in like manner "God being willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his council, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

† *Hittites.* The Hittites were descended from Heth, the son of Canaan, and grandson of Ham, Gen. x. 6. 16, who then possessed that country.

that he was at liberty to bury in what sepulchre he pleased. But this would not satisfy\* Abraham: for he proposed to buy a piece of ground for a separate sepulchre for himself and family; and therefore desired them to intreat Ephron, the prince of the country, to sell him the cave of Macpelah, offering to give the full worth of it. Ephron being a generous prince, though a heathen, offered Abraham not only the cave, but the whole field also, that he might bury his dead without delay. But Abraham, not willing to bring himself under so great an obligation, or to be at an uncertainty about the piece of ground, urged Ephron to fix a price; who, yielding to his importunity, observed, that as he was determined to purchase it, the land was worth four† hundred shekels of silver, which being so inconsiderable a trifle between men of rank and condition, he desired he would consider the ground as his own for the purpose intended. Abraham, therefore, without hesitation, concludes the agreement, and immediately paid the money by weight‡ to Ephron

\* *Satisfy.* Abraham knew the Lord had called him forth from among his idolatrous kindred and from his father's house, Gen. xii. 1. and given him the covenant of circumcision, Ch. xvii. 9, 10, &c. whereby he had distinguished him and his seed from all other people: And that therefore it was not lawful for him to mix with any of the other nations which did not worship the true God. As therefore he took especial care that his son Isaac might not marry with any of the daughters of the Canaanites; so now he was resolved not to bury his dead promiscuously among theirs; perhaps intimating thereby, that though the righteous live intermixed with the ungodly in this world, there will be a separation after death.

† *Four, &c.* Supposing the shekel here mentioned to be the common shekel, (as being used before the law, and in a civil and sacred case,) it was worth of our English money one shilling and three-pence, or very near it. After which computation, the four hundred shekels amounted to five and twenty pounds sterling.

‡ *Weight.* In those early ages of the world, as they had money in bullion unstamped, so it passed by weight, rather than by tale; and a *shekel* had its name from *shakal*, which signifies to weigh, or put in the balance.



in the presence of the people; upon which the field was, according to the custom of those times and places, formally conveyed and made sure to Abraham, and to his heirs for ever: And till then Abraham did not bury his wife there.

Abraham, being at this time near a hundred and forty years old, was desirous of seeing his son Isaac married and settled in the world before he died. Therefore calling his eldest servant to him, who was his chief steward, he laid a strict charge upon him that he would not take a wife for his son of the daughters of the Canaanites; but go into his own (meaning Abraham's) country, and bring a wife from thence of his own kindred. And to engage his steward to a punctual performance of his charge, he made him take a solemn oath, the ceremony of which was performed by the servant's putting his hand under his master's thigh;\* this engagement, after some needful cautions and limitations, Eliezer, (for that was the steward's name) solemnly made: after which, receiving his master's instructions, he set out with a retinue of servants and camels suitable to Abraham's quality and estate, and the business he went about. No doubt it was one great part of the steward's charge to go first to Haran in Mesopotamia, his brother Nahor's city, because he had heard before that Milcha his wife's sister, who was married to his brother Nahor, had borne him several children, one of which, named Bethuel, had a daughter called Rebecca.

Eliezer arriving one evening at Haran, caused his camels to rest themselves by a well of water without the city: about which time it was usual for the women to come out of the city to draw water at the well. Eliezer, who had been religiously brought up, and instructed by

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\* *Thigh.* Among the various ceremonies used in swearing, this was one, that the person who took an oath placed his hand under the thigh of him to whom it was made; as we read also in the case of dying Jacob and his son Joseph, Gen. xlvii. 29. This ceremony denoted *subjection*, as some suppose; others think that it refers to the ordinance of *circumcision*; while some, with more probability, conceive that it has a relation to Christ, the promised seed, who was to proceed from Abraham's loins.

his master Abraham in the fear of God, aware of the importance of the business with which he was intrusted, kept his mind intent upon the Most High, earnestly intreating his direction, and success in this weighty affair; and fearing lest in a matter of so great moment he should mistake the person, he humbly besought the Lord to direct him by a sign, that he might make a right choice for his young master. The sign he desired was, that she, who at his request should permit him to drink of her pitcher, and offer to give his camels drink also, should be the person whom the Lord appointed for his servant Isaac. The prayer of this pious man was heard:—in a few moments he perceived Bethuel's daughter coming out of the city with a pitcher upon her shoulder to fetch\* water. After she had filled it at the well, and was returning, Eliezer approached, and desired a draught of water. She courteously consented, and offered water, not only for himself, but for his camels also, if they would drink. Eliezer thankfully accepted the proposal, and permitted her to water the camels, which he would not have allowed, but for the purpose of being fully satisfied by means of the sign which he had requested.

After the camels had drank, Eliezer carefully observing the damsel, and seeing her exceeding beautiful, with great joy presents her with a pair of golden ear-rings, and a pair of bracelets for her hands; asking her at the same time whose daughter she was, and whether there was room in her father's house for him and his company to lodge that night. She, to his great astonishment, tells

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\* *Fetch.* Great was the simplicity and humility of those early ages, when persons of the first rank, and of the female sex too, did not disdain to be employed in such servile offices. Thus in the following age Jacob found his cousin Rachel following and watering her father Laban's sheep; and some ages after that, the seven daughters of Jethro, who was a prince as well as a priest of Midian, kept their father's flocks, and used to draw water, and fill the troughs for the cattle. To this day, throughout the greater part of the East, drawing and carrying water is an employment peculiar to the female sex.

him she was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor, by Milcha; assuring him at the same time, that they had both room and accommodations for himself and his camels.

Eliezer's surprise was greatly increased, and being deeply affected with a sense of God's goodness in guiding him so directly to the house of his master's brethren, he bowed down his head and worshipped the Lord, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not withdrawn his mercy and truth from him."\* Rebecca leaving Eliezer in this rapture, ran home to acquaint her friends with what had happened; but soon returned with her brother Laban, who could not but expect something extraordinary from the bracelets on his sister's hands, and from the account she gave him of the man who presented them to her. Laban hastened to the well, and saluting Eliezer in the style of "Thou blessed of the Lord," invited him in, telling him there was preparation made for him and his camels. He thereupon went in; and, whilst they were preparing an entertainment for him and his company, declared he would not take any refreshment till he had told the errand on which he was sent; and having delivered his credentials by telling to whom he belonged, he gave a general account of his master's estate, and then proceeded to the principal business. "Sarah, my master's wife, (said he) bare him a son when she was old, unto whom he hath given all that he hath. And my master hath made me swear that I should not take a wife for his son of the daughters of the Canaanites, but that I should go to his father's house, and to his kindred, to take a wife for his son." He then gave them an account of his journey; the manner of his meeting with Rebecca, and how signally the hand

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\* *Him, &c.* In this whole affair we see the hand of divine providence. And so it is in those events which we are too apt to think the effect of *choice, contrivance, or chance*; for all is the effect of divine appointment or permission.



of Divine Providence had appeared in directing him thither; concluding thus, "And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me, if not,\* tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left."

Laban,† who undertook to give Eliezer an answer, at once entertained a right apprehension of the matter, declaring it was God's doing; "therefore, (said he,) we ought‡ not to say any thing to it. Here is Rebecca before thee; if she consent, take her, and let her be thy master's son's wife." Eliezer having obtained her consent, offers his acknowledgments to God; and making his presents to her, her mother and brother, they sat down to supper. Next morning he desired them to dispatch him back to his master, being impatient to carry home the joyful tidings. The brother and mother being loth to part with Rebecca so soon, would have her

\* *If not, &c.* Meaning that they should not hold him in suspense, but let him know their minds whether they would bestow Rebecca on his master's son, or not; that if not, he might seek a wife elsewhere.

† *Laban.* It is to be supposed that Bethuel, Rebecca's father, either was superannuated, or laboured under some bodily infirmity, which rendered him less capable of managing the affairs of his family, otherwise we can scarcely suppose his son Laban would have taken so much upon him in his father's house.

‡ *Ought.* Our translation says, "We cannot speak unto thee either good or evil." Commentators indeed observe that this expression, *We cannot*, here, in Gen. xxiv. 50. and in Gen. xix. v. 22, that "God could not do any thing to Sodom till Lot had escaped," does not always denote an inability to do any thing, but only a design or will not to do it, because it may not be proper or convenient; and that all this impotency is to be attributed to the want of will. But since people are apt to understand these places literally, they ought to be translated properly and clearly, and after such a manner that should leave no room for doubts and mistakes. And therefore when Laban answered Eliezer, he told him, "They ought not, (or would not) say any thing good or bad to him;" that is, they would not oppose his demand of having Rebecca for his master's son's wife: . And this was manifestly the effect of their submission to the will of God, from whom they were convinced that this proceeded, and they were persuaded they were bound to obey.



tarry a little longer; but Eliezer, like a diligent as well as faithful servant, was for hastening home with her, which with Rebecca's consent, he did. Accordingly she prepared for her journey, being attended with her nurse Deborah and maid servants, her relations pronouncing on her this blessing at parting; "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gates of them which hate them."

While the faithful servant was conveying his fair charge to his master's house, Providence had so ordered it, that Isaac walking out in the evening, to meditate on the goodness of the Lord, saw his servants and the camels upon the road; whereupon he went forward to meet them. Rebecca soon observed him, and asked Eliezer who he was; and being informed that it was his master's son, she alighted, and veiled\* herself. Isaac with great respect received her, and conducted her to his mother's tent, which was allotted for her apartment. Soon after which, the marriage was solemnized. This union, so happily effected, under the smiles of Providence, proved the source of much satisfaction. Isaac was a very affectionate husband; and found in this new relation, consolation for the loss of his affectionate parent Sarah, whose removal, though at a very advanced age, he had sincerely lamented for a long time.

Isaac being thus happily married, the good old patriarch his father begins to entertain thoughts of another wife; and casting his eyes upon his maid Keturah,† he took her to

\* *Veiled.* According to the custom of those countries, veiling was a token of subjection, and it is in general use throughout the eastern world to this day.

† *Keturah.* The Jewish writers are very fabulous about this Keturah, some supposing her to be the same with Hagar; but in all probability she might be dead as well as Sarah; and if she had been alive, too old to have more children. But laying aside fables and conjecture, it is certain from Gen. xxv. 6. that Keturah was a servant; for if she had been a free woman, she would not have been called a concubine. But besides, the word *concubine* (not only here in Gen. xv. 6. but also in 1 Chron. i. 32.) gives occasion to some to suppose that he married her in Sarah's life time; for concubine was a term not usually given to such second wives as succeed others; but to such as in the life-time of the first wife were partakers of the marriage-bed.

his bed, and she was his concubinary wife. By her he had six sons ; to each of whom he gave a portion in his life time, and sent them eastward, that they might not stand in competition with Isaac for any part of his estate, nor settle any where in the land of Canaan, which his seed, by Isaac, was to inherit.

Isaac was forty years old when he married, and he lived twenty years with his amiable consort before they were favoured with any issue, which, however, was at length obtained in answer to his importunate prayers. Rebecca, being pregnant, perceived the children (for she had twins) struggling together within her ; this peculiar circumstance startled her, and excited no small surprise as to what it might portend. Upon which she went to inquire\* of the Lord, and received for answer, “ That two nations” (or heads of nations) “ were in her womb ; and that two “ manner of people should be separated from her bowels : “ That one of those people should be stronger than the “ other, and that the elder should serve the younger.” The time of their birth being arrived, Rebecca was first delivered of Esau, who was red and hairy. His brother Jacob followed him so close, that he took hold of his heel with his hand. The boys growing up, Esau delighted altogether in the fields, being addicted to hunting ; and because he furnished his father with venison, a sort of food of which Isaac was very fond, therefore he loved him best. But Jacob, who was of a less robust disposition, was beloved by his mother, being more conversant with her, and ready at hand to wait on her. By the time that these youths were fifteen years old, their grandfather Abraham departed this world, being a hundred and seventy-five years of age, and was buried by his sons Ishmael and Isaac in the cave of Macpelah, in the field which he had

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\* *Inquire.* This in those times was usually done by consulting some prophet : And her father-in-law Abraham being a prophet, (for so he is expressly called by God himself, Gen. xx. 7.) and then living, it is most probable she enquired of him.

purchased of the sons of Heth, and where about forty years before, he had buried Sarah his wife.

As for Ishmael, Abraham's eldest son, (though not his heir,) he lived many years after this, till he attained to a hundred and thirty seven years. And then leaving, as was foretold\* of him, twelve sons, who were all princes of nations, and possessed of towns and castles, he likewise died. And although he had been such a wild man that his hand† had been against every man, and every man's hand against him, yet he died at last in the presence of his brethren, that is, a natural death, having his family and relations about him.

Esau and Jacob being grown to man's estate, it happened one day that Esau having fatigued himself extremely in the field, came fainting to Jacob, who at that very time had just made some pottage of lentils,‡ which was of a red colour. Esau, seeing the pottage, and his spirits being very much wasted with hunger, desired his brother to let him eat with him, telling him, the more to move him, that he was very faint. Jacob, though called a plain§ or innocent man, knew how to take advantage of his brother's necessity, and therefore to inflame his desire the more, which was sufficiently prompted by his present hunger, and to make Esau the more fond of the bargain by delays, proposes to him to sell his birth-right.|| Esau through greediness not considering of what moment

\* *Foretold.* See Gen. xvii. 20.

† *Hand, &c.* See Gen. xvi. 12.

‡ *Lentils.* A kind of pulse, somewhat like our vetches, or coarsest sort of pease.

§ *Plain.* See Gen. xxv. 27.

|| *Birth-right.* Birth-right, or right of primogeniture, had many and great privileges annexed to it. The first-born was consecrated to the Lord, Exod. xxii. 29, was next in honour and dignity to the parents, Gen. xlix. 3. had a double portion allotted to him, Deut. xxi. 17. and succeeded in the government of the family or kingdom, 2 Chron. xxi. 3. and therefore was a matter of the highest regard.

and advantage his birth-right was, and consulting only his present need and appetite; slightly answers, "Behold I am ready to die, and what good shall this birth-right do me?" Jacob finding him so indifferent, was not content with his word, but to make the bargain sure, would not part with his pottage till he had obliged his brother to confirm the birth-right to him by an oath. Esau never scruples it; and so sold his birth-right, with all those excellent privileges that depended on it, for a mess of pottage. This in Esau is called "despising\* his birth-right."

Isaac had hitherto made Beersheba his usual residence, as his father Abraham did before him; but a famine happening in that part of the country where he lived, he was obliged to remove. Now, while he deliberated whether to go, the Lord appeared unto him and charged him not to go down into Egypt, but to stay in the land which he should shew him, promising to be with him, and bless him; and assuring him that he would give all those countries to him and his descendants, in performance of the oath which he sware to his father Abraham, and that he would cause his family to multiply as the stars of heaven; and nations of the earth to account themselves blessed therein, because of the faith and obedience of Abraham.

Isaac, in pursuance of the divine direction, travels to the country of the Philistines, and fixes in Gerar. And here the same temptation assaulted him that befel his father in the same place: Rebecca his wife was a beautiful woman, and he, fearing the people would kill him on her account, when they enquired in what degree they were

\* *Despising.* See Gen. xxv. 34. He is also called, Heb. xii. 16. "Profane Esau." He despised the *Patriarchal Blessing*, wherein the promised seed was included, and of which the birth-right was an external sign; so that by selling his birth-right, he virtually renounced his right to it. Several years afterwards, "he would have inherited the blessing, and sought it diligently with tears;" but he sought it too late, and not of God, by prayer and faith, but only of his father. No man knows to what sad events one deliberate sin, especially of profaneness, may lead; and sin may be the *occasion* of great sorrow, where there is no true sorrow for sin.



related to each other, he told them she was his sister, an appellation then common among kindred in almost any degree. Isaac did not long continue unsuspected; for Abimelech\* (or the king) looking out of a window, saw him so familiar with Rebecca, as gave him cause to think she was his wife; and sending for Isaac, reprov'd him for imposing upon him, telling him confidently she was his wife. Isaac being thus charged, could not deny it, but excused himself, saying, he did it to save his life. The king at first blamed him for laying such a snare for him and his people, saying, "What is this thou hast done? one of the people might have lain with thy wife, and thou wouldst have brought guilt upon us;" and then gave a strict charge on pain of death to all his subjects, that none should offer any injury to him or his wife.

Isaac by this protection being encouraged to tarry there longer, applied himself to husbandry, wherein he was so successful, that the land he sowed yielded him a crop of an hundred-fold, by which, and God's continual blessing upon him, he became so wealthy and powerful, that Abimelech's servants grew jealous, and to oblige him to depart the country, filled up the wells which his father's servants had digg'd. Abimelech himself was possessed with the same jealousy, and therefore spoke to Isaac to withdraw to some other place, because he was grown more potent than himself.

Isaac, as well to secure himself, as to make Abimelech easy, departs to the valley of Gerar, where he clears the wells which Abraham had formerly caused to be digg'd, and which the Philistines had fill'd up, giving them the names they bore before. Here he likewise dug a new well; but a quarrel happening between the shepherds of Gerar, and those of Isaac, the former affirming that those wells belonged to them, Isaac's people quitted it, calling that

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\* *Abimelech*. It is very probable this Abimelech might be the son of that Abimelech, King of Gerar, with whom Abraham had formerly made a covenant:

well Esek, which signifies contention. They likewise dug another well, which was also contended for, and Isaac called it Sitnah, or hatred. Isaac, grown weary of such quarrelsome neighbours, removed further from them, and sunk another well, about which there was no controversy, and therefore he named it Rehoboth, which signifies Room; "for now, (saith he) the Lord hath given us room, and "we shall increase upon the earth."

Isaac tarried not long here, but went to Beersheba, where, the same night he arrived, God appeared to him, comforting and encouraging him, and renewed his promise to bless him and multiply his seed, for his servant Abraham's sake. Then Isaac built an altar there and worshipped the Lord; and because he intended to reside there for some time, he ordered his servants to dig a well; for in those hot and dry countries water was very scarce.

During Isaac's abode here, Abimelech, reflecting how unkindly he had treated him, and by the quarrelsome and injurious conduct of his servants forced him to remove, and justly fearing Isaac might resent it, thought it adviseable for preventing future animosities to make him a visit, and propose entering into a league of amity: Therefore taking Ahuzzath,\* one of his friends, and Phicol† his

\* *Abuzzath*. The Septuagint most properly seem to call this Ahuzzath the Paranymp or Brideman of Abimelech; for the Paranymps were esteemed the most honourable among them, as being next to the bridegroom, and they that always conducted them to the nuptial bed. The Paranymp among the Persians was afterwards the next to the king, and was the person that always crowned him. And as such we may suppose this Ahuzzath to have been to Abimelech.

† *Phicol*. This was not that Phicol who lived with the former Abimelech in the days of Abraham, mentioned Gen. xxi. 22. for that was an hundred years before. It is therefore very probable that as Abimelech was the name for King of the Philistines, as Cæsar was for the Roman Emperors, and Pharaoh for the Kings of Egypt, so this word Phicol was the common name of their generals, not Captain of the King's Guard, (for that was Ahuzzath's the Paranymp's post) as the word implies, which signifies the *Face* or *Head*, as a general is of the forces he commands.

general, he went to Isaac at Beersheba. Isaac, to let them know he was sensible of the injuries done him, gave them at first but a cold reception; asking them wherefore they came to see him, whom they had so uncivilly treated? Abimelech unwilling to revive old quarrels, addresses himself with much respect and friendship to Isaac, telling him, that he was convinced of the particular regard God had for him, and for that reason desired to enter into a league of friendship with him; assuring him, that he was always his friend, and wished him well, concluding with the pleasing compellation, "Thou blessed of the Lord."

Isaac, perceiving their friendly intention, and being himself of a quiet and pacific temper, entertained them with much respect and liberality; and the next morning they made a league, and confirmed it by a mutual oath: After which they took a solemn leave and parted. Let us now return to Esau, of whom the last act that we have recorded is the selling his birth-right. The next thing we find of him is his afflicting his pious parents with ungodly marriages.

Esau was now forty years of age; never well inclined, but since the slighting of his birth-right much worse; and though he could not be ignorant of the solicitude of Abraham, that his father Isaac might not marry into an idolatrous family; he went and took two Hittites, Judith and Bashemath, to be his wives; which was no small grief to his parents. And yet natural affection\* so prevailed with this good father, that when he was grown old, and his sight gone, he called his son Esau to him, and advising him to consider his age and the uncertainty of his life, bid him take his bow and quiver, and kill him some venison, and

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\* *Affection.* Good Isaac, swayed by an over-fond affection to a disobedient and rebellious son, would have preferred the order of nature to the will of God, who had expressly declared, before Esau and Jacob were born, that the elder should serve the younger. But God would not permit his purpose to be so disappointed; and therefore being unwilling to deal hardly with Isaac, he permitted him to be imposed upon by his wife and younger son, and thereby drawn to do that unwittingly, which to have done knowingly would have caused great uneasiness to him.

make him a savoury dish, that he might eat thereof, and give him the blessing appendant to his birth-right before he died. Rebecca overheard what had passed between her husband and her son Esau; wherefore, as soon as Esau was gone to hunting, she called her son Jacob to her; and having told him what she heard his father say to his brother, first enjoining him a punctual obedience to all her directions, she bids him go to the flock, and fetch from thence two kids of the goats, and with them, said she, "I will make such savoury meat for thy father as he loves, and thou shalt bring it to thy father; that he may eat and bless thee before his death." Jacob had obtained the birth-right already, and knew that the paternal blessing did usually attend it; but he was fearful that if he should get it by indirect means, he should forfeit the blessing and get a curse instead of it. This fear was aggravated by reflecting on the difference between his brother's complexion and his own; for Esau was hairy, and he was smooth; so that if his father (to supply his defect of sight by feeling) should handle them, he might easily discover the cheat. And this he objected to his mother; who having continually in her mind the words of the divine Oracle, "The elder shall serve the younger," Gen. xxv. 23. with assurance answered him, "Upon me be the curse, my son, only obey my voice, and without delay go fetch me the kids." Jacob, very sensible of his mother's tenderness towards him, disputed her will no longer, but went and brought the kids, of which she made such savoury meat as she knew her husband loved. Then dressing Jacob in Esau's best clothes, and covering his hands and neck with the hairy skins of the kids, she gave him the meat to carry to his father; who, as soon as he heard Jacob enter the room, asked, Who art thou? Jacob answered, "I am\* Esau, thy first-born; I have done as thou commandest me, rise and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me."

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\* *I am.* It is probable he meant that he did represent Esau, or stood in the place of Esau the first-born, by virtue of the purchase he had made of the primogeniture or birth-right of his brother.



Isaac wondering that he had made such haste, asked him how it came to pass that he had taken the venison so quickly. Jacob replied, "Because the Lord brought\* it to me." Isaac, not willing to trust to his hearing only, called Jacob to come near him, that he might feel him, and thereby know whether he was his very son Esau or not. The good old man, when he had felt Jacob's hands, being deceived by the hairy kids' skins, could not be sure it was Jacob or Esau, but shewed his uncertainty by saying, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." Having nothing but his son's veracity to depend upon, he put the question more closely to him, "Art thou my very son Esau?" To which Jacob more readily than truly answering, "I am;"† the good old man

\* *Brought.* Some will be apt to think that this imposing upon Isaac's blindness was inexcusable in Jacob; but let such consider, that the blessing being due to the eldest son, and Jacob having bought his brother's birth-right, the blessing (which Esau had despised in despising his birth-right) was due to him; and as for the lie which they charge upon Jacob saying, *The Lord brought the venison to him*, it is highly probable he meant that the Lord had put that invention or contrivance of the kids, into his mother's mind, and by her had brought it to him.

† *I am.* But though hitherto Jacob might seem excusable upon the right of primogeniture fairly transferred to him by bargain; yet here he is guilty of a positive lie. His conduct cannot be justified. While we give him the credit of some pious wishes, we must abhor the ungenerous and dishonest means by which he effected his purpose. To do evil that good may come, is a principle that must never be adopted by pious persons; and the example of Jacob should deter us from deviating a single step from the path of rectitude. If we venture on one transgression, we may be tempted to conceal it by having recourse to falsehood; and one lie makes way for another: a second, and third are wanted to hide the first. Such is the progress of vice.

While we censure the conduct of Jacob, that of his mother seems still more blameable. She proposes and recommends the base deception, and offers to take the whole blame on herself. Alas! how many parents imitate her, by training up their children in the arts of dissimulation for the sake of worldly advantage. Both Rebecca and Jacob might probably have a regard to the intimation of heaven concerning the precedency of the younger son; but no regard of promises will jus-

urged no further ; but taking him indeed for Esau, bid him bring the meat, that he might eat of it and bless him. Isaac having eat of the venison and drank wine, calls his son to come near and kiss him ; which, when Jacob did, his father perceiving the smell, not only of the kids' skins, but of the clothes he had on, gave his blessing to Jacob in this manner : “ Behold, the smell\* of my son is as the “ smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed : Therefore “ God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the “ earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve “ thee, and nations bow down to thee. Be lord over thy “ brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee : “ cursed be every one that curseth thee ; and blessed be “ he that blesseth thee.” Jacob was no sooner gone from his father than Esau came in, bringing his father the venison dressed, and said to him, “ Arise my father and eat of thy “ son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.” Isaac in great surprise and disorder hastily asked, “ Who art thou ?” To which Esau replying, “ I am thy son, thy first-born, “ Esau ;” A very great trembling seized him, so that he exclaimed, “ Who, and where is he that hath taken veni- “ son and brought it to me, and I have eaten of all before “ thou camest, and have blessed him ?” And being by this time sensible of a divine superintending hand therein, added, “ Yea, and he shall be blessed.” Esau hearing this, cried out, and in much confusion, said to his father, “ Bless me, even me also, O my father.” Isaac to excuse

tify the arts of falsehood ; and true faith will wait patiently for the accomplishment of the divine decrees in a way consistent with justice and truth, for “ he that believeth shall not make haste.”

\* *Smell.* Rebecca had put the clothes of Esau her elder son on Jacob—“ the goodly or desirable raiment,” Gen. xxvii. 15. These were probably the garments pertaining to the priest's office, handed down from the earliest ages, in the holy patriarchal line, and preserved amidst odorific and aromatic spices. When Isaac smelled these, it revived his spirits, for he had a respect to the great promise of the Saviour, the High Priest and sweet smelling sacrifice of our profession,

himself for having given the blessing from him, told him that his brother had deceived him, and obtained the blessing from him. Esau complained, that his brother had supplanted him, and having no hopes to prevail with his father to reverse the blessing given to his brother, said to him, "Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" Isaac wanted not good will to Esau; but he had emptied the choicest of his stores upon Jacob, saying, "I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants, and have granted him plenty of corn and wine: And what shall I now do unto thee, my son?" "Alas! said Esau, hast thou but one blessing? Bless me, even me, also, O my father." At which words he wept\* aloud. Isaac, moved with compassion for Esau, that he might somewhat pacify him, and do as well for him as he could, tells him, "Thy dwelling† shall be the fatness of the earth, and thou shalt have of the dew of heaven

\* *Wept.* Long after, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, ch. xii. 16, 17. took notice of this, where having branded Esau with profaneness in despising his birth-right, and selling it for a morsel of meat, he observes, that when afterwards he would have inherited the blessing he was rejected: for though he sought it carefully and with tears, yet he found no place of repentance in his father: Neither prayers nor tears could prevail with Isaac to revoke the blessing he had by divine appointment given to Jacob, "I have blessed him, (said he) yea and he shall be blessed."

† *Thy dwelling, &c.* This which is here said to Esau looks more like a prediction of what would befall him. To Jacob it was said, "God give thee of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth," &c. But to Esau, "Thy dwelling place shall be in the fatness of the earth," &c. And whereas power and sovereignty, not only over Esau and his posterity, but more generally over people and nations, is wished to Jacob; Esau is told, that he should live by his sword (which is but an unsafe, uneasy, and unquiet course of life) and should serve his brother; which must needs grate hard on Esau's haughty temper. Only for his comfort it is prophetically added, that he in his posterity should at one time or other have a dominion also; and that then they should break their brother's yoke from off their necks: which was begun and attempted in King Joram's time, 2 Kings, xx. 22. but not completed till King Herod's time, who was an Edomite.

“above: Thou shalt live by thy sword, and shalt be subject to thy brother; but the time will come when thou shalt shake off his yoke.”

Esau had conceived such hatred against his brother for depriving him of the blessing, that he resolved to be revenged; and supposing his father could not live long, intended as soon as he was dead to murder him. Rebecca, being apprized of Esau's unnatural design upon her favourite son, acquaints Jacob with his brother's threats, and advises him to make a visit to his uncle Laban at Haran, and stay there till his brother's rage should subside, which when she had observed, she would send for him home again. Jacob, who was of a mild, and perhaps timid disposition, knowing Esau's rugged temper, was very willing to comply with his mother's proposal, but not to go without his father's consent, which he very much doubted. But Rebecca managed that matter cunningly enough; for taking an opportunity, she complains of the uneasiness she was under upon the account of Esau's Hittite wives, urging her fear, lest his example should influence Jacob to do the like. Isaac knew not the drift of this complaint, but being a pious man, and knowing that the promise made to Abraham, and renewed to him, was to be completed in the issue of Jacob, and being careful that he should not corrupt his blood by mixing with any of those nations which were to be destroyed, forthwith called Jacob to him, and with his blessing gave him a strict charge that he should not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, but go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel his mother's father, and from thence take him a wife of the daughters of Laban his mother's brother. And to encourage him, he said, “God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful and multiply thee, that thou mayest become the father of many people: May he bestow on thee and thy race the blessings promised to Abraham, that thou mayest possess the land in which thou art now a stranger, and which he promised to thy grandfather.” This contrivance so completely succeeding, Isaac dispatches his son away immediately, who accordingly sets out for Padan-aram.



Esau, understanding that his father had confirmed the blessing to his brother, and sent him to Padan-aram, to take a wife there, with a strict prohibition not to marry any Canaanitish woman, and that Jacob in obedience to his parents was gone; reflecting likewise with himself, that his father was displeased with him, for having taken those Hittite wives, who were of Canaanitish families, and thinking to ingratiate himself again with his father, he went and took Mahalath, his uncle Ishmael's daughter to be his wife; which mended the matter but little.

Jacob, departing from Beersheba, made the best of his way to Haran, but being benighted, was forced to take up his lodging in the open air, where the spangled sky was his canopy, and a hard stone his pillow. Whilst he slept, he dreamed that he saw a ladder set upon the earth, the top of which reached to heaven, and upon it were angels ascending and descending.\* Above it stood the Lord, who said to him, "I am the Lord God of Abraham and of Isaac: I will give the land whereon thou liest to thee and to thy issue; which shall be as numerous as the dust of the earth, and extend to all parts of it; and all nations shall be blessed in thy posterity. I will be thy guide wheresoever thou shalt go, I will bring thee back into this country, and will not forsake thee, but perform all that I have promised." This dream made so great an impression on Jacob, that when he awaked, paying an awful reverence to the place where he had rested, he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." This, probably, was the first time that God had so immediately appeared to him; and which affected him with

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\* The *Place* in which Jacob took up his lodging was in, or near, the city of LUZ, afterwards called BETHEL; and seems to have been a place (open or covered) devoted to worship—a temple; and the *stones* were probably cherubic, or emblematical ones, afterwards called a *pillar*, Gen. xxviii. 18. and which, as a priest, he consecrated by anointing it, or the head of it, with oil; a ceremony much used in ancient times. This was not then superstitious or unlawful, for God himself mentions it with approbation, Gen. xxxi. 13.

such a religious fear, that in a holy rapture he said, “How venerable is this place! This is the house of God, and the gate of Heaven.” He then took the stone on which he had slept, and set it up for a monument of God’s love to him in so eminently appearing and confirming his gracious promises, and as a mark whereby to know the place whenever he should come that way again. Having set up the stone, he poured oil\* over it; and in pious commemoration of the heavenly vision which he saw here, this place, which before was called Luz, he now calls Bethel, † that is, The house of God. But before he went from hence he took his leave in a very solemn manner, for, repeating some part of what the Lord had said to him, he made a vow, the more strongly to bind himself to God’s service, saying, “If God will be with me, and direct me in my journey, and will give me meat to eat, and raiment to put on; so that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: And this stone which I have set up for a pillar shall be God’s house: ‡ And of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth § unto thee.”

\* *Oil.* This being the first mention we have of oil, either as to the use, nature or name of it, it seems reasonable to suppose, that he used it here (and so afterwards Gen. xxxv. 14.) by way of religious consecration, and that by divine direction. Afterwards, in the law, much use was made of oil for sacred purposes, in the consecration of priests, offerings, &c. Which ceremony (says one) signified these two things. First, That Christ was anointed and consecrated to his office of mediatorship, with fulness of the Holy Ghost. Secondly, That the anointing of the Spirit is that which makes us and all our services acceptable to God.

† *Bethel.* It is the very place where afterwards was built the town of that name, of the Tribe of Benjamin, on the borders of the Tribe of Ephraim.

‡ *House.* That is, in the place where I have set up this pillar will I worship God.

§ *Tenth.* This is the second mention of Tythes or Tenths, and the first vow concerning them, made voluntarily and expressed in the terms of giving

Having thus performed his devotions, and received such encouragement to confide in the divine protection, he proceeded cheerfully on his journey till he came to Haran; and being near the town, he met with flocks and shepherds near a well. He asked them, whether they knew Laban the son of Nahor; they told him they did, that he was in good health, and that his daughter Rachel would soon be there with her flock. She came in a short time after this discourse, and Jacob very obligingly rolled away the stone from the well's mouth and watered her sheep for her: which done, he told her who he was, and saluting her with a kiss, he wept for joy.

Rachel, leaving Jacob at the well, made haste to tell her father whom she had met; who, hearing of the arrival of his sister's son, in joyful haste ran out to meet him; and having embraced and kissed him, he brought him home with him. To whom Jacob gave an account of the occasion of his coming from home, and of the vision he had seen by the way. By which Laban found that his nephew had not misbehaved himself at home, or left his parents without their consent and direction, though he came so bare and unattended. Besides, it was necessary for Jacob to apprise Laban that he was under the immediate protection and care of Providence. Laban having heard these things, acknowledges him to be his near kinsman, and gave him a kind reception; and Jacob, to convince his uncle that he was not used to an idle useless course of life, enters himself in the business of the family, as intending to make some stay there. Which when Laban saw, he took an opportunity to discourse with his nephew, and let him know that he did not expect, nor think it reasonable he should serve him for nothing; therefore he desired him to name what wages he would have. The lovely shepherdess at the first interview had made a

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them to God. How, or when it was performed we are not told, unless it were by an offering unto God, when Jacob built an altar at El-Bethel, and set up a pillar in the place where God had talked with him, and poured a drink-offering; and oil thereon, at his return from Padan-aram, Gen. xxxv. 7. 14.



strong impression on Jacob's heart, and her he asked as the reward of seven years' service. Laban readily consented, and Jacob immediately enters on his seven years, which his fondness for Rachel rendered short.

The time being expired, Jacob demanded his wife. Upon which Laban solemnized the nuptials in a public manner, inviting his friends and neighbours: But, being desirous of detaining Jacob in his service for a longer time, he put a very unfair trick upon him; for in the evening he took Leah, and brought her to Jacob's bed\* instead of Rachel. Jacob in the morning finding the cheat, complained to his father-in-law; who put it off with a very slender excuse, alledging that it was not the custom of that country to give the younger in marriage before the elder. This was but a poor excuse indeed; but Laban, who had all along observed Jacob's strong affection for Rachel, knew he could bring him to any terms, however unreasonable; which made him demand another seven years' service for his younger daughter, though at the same time he was afraid Jacob in resentment for the injury done him, should reject Leah, and not receive her for his wife; wherefore he intreats him to fulfil her week; † " And then, (said he) I will

\* *Bed.* It was the custom of the country that the bride should be covered with a veil when she was brought to the bridegroom: by which means Jacob was imposed upon by Laban till the next morning. The same custom still prevails universally throughout the East.

† *Week.* Or seven days, which time according to the custom of those countries was dedicated to the nuptial solemnities. And by this fulfilling Leah's week was intended, that Jacob should openly acknowledge her for his wife, which Laban seemed to doubt: and at the end of the week should marry Rachel. Though by the word *Week* here, some understand a *Week of Years*, or seven years: And to fulfil her week he was to serve the other seven years for Rachel afterwards. Some old English versions render it so; but the LXX is otherwise, for it is positively there a *Week*, at the end of which he was to have Rachel, and serve seven years for her afterwards. And this appears to be the right sense of the place by the order of the story: For though Jacob lived with Laban twenty years, (Gen. xxxi. 28, and 41,) yet it is plain at the end of the fourteenth year Jacob proposed to part, and return home. But Rachel had borne Joseph before that; (Gen. xxx.



“give\* thee this also, for the service which thou shalt serve with me seven other years.” Jacob consenting to Laban’s proposal, fulfilled Leah’s week, and then married Rachel; of whom he was so fond, that he slighted† Leah. But God pitying her, rendered her fruitful, and restrained Rachel from bearing: So that Leah had four sons, viz. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, before Rachel had one. This was a great trouble to Rachel, which in a short time interrupted the domestic tranquillity, and at length ripened into actual enmity. Rachel being blinded with her too earnest desire of children, imputes her barrenness to her husband, and vents her discontent in a very unadvised and passionate expression, saying, “Give me children, or I die.” Jacob was always very fond of her, but like a prudent man, his judgment got the ascendant of his affection; and though he was naturally of a mild temper, yet these rash, inconsiderate words of Rachel so much incensed him, that he could not forbear giving her this smart, though short reproof: “Am I in God’s stead; who hath made thee “barren?”

Rachel thus rebuked and brought to a sense of her folly, began to think with herself of another way to supply this defect of nature, as she thought, by having recourse to her grandmother Sarah’s stratagem; and therefore having conversed on the subject with her husband, she gives him her maid Bilhah, for an under-wife or concubine, reckoning with herself, that what children Jacob should have by her maid, should be hers; for she would cherish them as if they

25.) and besides, she had been a barren wife a good while before she had Joseph; and had two sons also by her maid Bilhah before that event; all which could not have been, if she had not been married before the end of his second seven years.

\* *I will give, &c.* Some will have this, We will give; that is, I, and my wife and friends; but the LXX say, I will give.

† *Slighted.* Our version renders this *hated*; but it should have been considered, that the word which is rendered to *bate*, does also signify to *love less*, or *take less care* of a thing, and not to wish to do it any harm.

had been her own. Accordingly, when Bilhah bore Jacob a son, Rachel claims him, takes him for her own, and names him Dan; she likewise did the same by the second, and called his name Naphtali. Leah imitates her sister's policy, because she thought she had ceased bearing children; and gave her husband her maid Zilpah to wife, who had two sons, whom she called Gad and Assur.

By this time Reuben was sufficiently grown up to be trusted by himself in the fields; where, as he was one day wandering, he found some mandrakes,\* which he brought home to his mother. Rachel seeing them, had a great desire to have them, and desired her sister to give her some of them; Leah thinking Rachel had too great a share in her husband's affection, and forgetting that her sister, not herself, was Jacob's choice, answers her somewhat churlishly, "Is it not enough that you have taken my husband from me, but you must take away my son's mandrakes also?" Rachel might have retorted sharply, but having a mind to the mandrakes, she would not contend, but proposed an agreement; she therefore tells her sister, that if she will give her some of them, she

\* *Mandrakes*. What these were is much disputed by our Biblical Critics, as the reader may perceive in Calmet's Dictionary on the word, and in Scripture Illustrated, by the editor of that work. The general opinion has been, that Mandrakes are a plant that stupifies, and was considered a provocative, whether justly or not, we are unable to say. It has been called *Anthropomorphis*, or *man-shaped*, because the roots are forked from the middle downwards, resembling the thighs and legs of a man. Of the Hebrew word דודאים (DUDAIM) the Jews at this day do not understand the true signification. Some translate it *Violets*, others *Lilies*, or *Jessamin*: Irenius calls it *agreeable flowers*, a sense which our author prefers. Others conjecture it might be *Citrons*, while some modern writers judge it was a species of *Melons*. Some of the ancients named Mandrakes *the Apple of Love*, and *Venus*. The Emperor Julian in his epistle to Calixines, says, he drinks the juice of Mandrakes to excite amorous inclinations. Some think that the *Ginseng* of the Chinese is a species of this plant; but what has been imported into England, does not justify this opinion. The Chinese, however, entertain some strange notions of its revivifying powers. Whatever the *Dudaim* was, and which probably it is not in our power to determine, it seems certain that it was supposed to possess important powers, and that there is a reference to these in Canticles vii. 13.

shall enjoy her husband's company that night. Leah likes the proposal, and they agree upon it; Leah, therefore went out in the evening to meet Jacob at his return from the field; and having acquainted him with the terms of their agreement, invites him to her apartment. And though but a little before she thought she had done bearing, she conceived again and brought forth her fifth son, and called him Issachar, because he was the fruit of her hire. After that, conceiving again, she bore a sixth son, whom she named Zebulun; and at last she bare Jacob the only daughter we read he had, whose name was Dinah.

Hitherto, Rachel had no issue of her own body: but now it pleased God to remember her; and having by long barrenness corrected her inordinate desire for children, he at length hearkened to her request, and blessed her with a son: upon which, rejoicing that God had taken away her reproach,\* and, predicting that the Lord would give her another son, she called the name of this boy Joseph. Soon after whose birth Jacob having served his last seven years, began to entertain thoughts of returning to his own country; therefore putting Laban in mind, that the time for which he had contracted to serve him was now expired, he desired him to deliver him his wives and children and send him away. This was a very disagreeable proposal to Laban; who acknowledging the great advantages he had received from Jacob's service, and that he was sensible the Lord had blessed him for his sake, earnestly intreated him to tarry still with him, offering him at the same time what wages he would ask. Jacob was as sensible of the benefits of his service as Laban, and valued himself upon them, telling him how, by the blessing of God upon his careful management, his little flock was increased to a multitude; wishing him to consider how his own family was increased, having now many children, for whom it was time to make some provision, and therefore insisted upon his

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\* *Reproach.* So barrenness was then accounted; and fruitfulness a blessing; chiefly in expectation of being the mother of the Messiah, the promised "Seed of the woman," in whom the world was to be blessed.



return to his own country. Laban could not hear of parting, and therefore presses him to stay, offering him his own terms. Jacob, overcome by Laban's importunity, told him he should give him nothing; but if he approved of the terms he should offer, he would continue in his service. The terms were these: They should pass through the whole flock both of sheep and goats, and separating the speckled cattle from the white, Laban's sons should take care of the spotted flock, and Jacob of the white: and then whatsoever spotted or brown cattle should be produced out of the white flock which he was to keep, was to be his hire. Laban readily closed with these conditions, and accordingly they parted the flocks, delivering the spotted cattle to Laban's sons, and the rest to Jacob's care: and Laban, that he might prevent any intercourse between them, set them three days' journey asunder.

The flocks being thus disposed, the divine wisdom,\* by enlightening Jacob's understanding, put him in a way to improve his own stock, and at the same time to lessen that of Laban, as a due recompence for his covetousness. Jacob took twigs of green poplar, hazel, and chesnut-trees, and peeling off the rinds in strakes, made the white to appear in the twigs; which, placing in the watering troughs, when the cattle came to drink, they seeing the speckled twigs, conceived and brought forth speckled cattle. Besides, he took especial care to place the twigs before the lustiest and strongest cattle; but before the weak and feeble he did not lay any: by which artifice he procured to himself,

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\* *Divine Wisdom.* Here is a reward of Jacob's dependence on Providence for his wages, for he had found so much fraud in his father-in-law's dealing, that he had little reason to trust to his honesty. And in the same instance God remembered Laban's unrighteous dealing with Jacob, how he deceived him in his first marriage, giving him his deformed daughter Leah instead of the beautiful Rachel; and how from a covetous desire to serve himself upon him, he had contrived ways to detain him in his service: Now therefore God takes from Laban the riches he had before given him for Jacob's sake, and bestows them upon Jacob: and that in such a manner, as Laban could neither help himself, nor justly find fault with Jacob.



not only the greater number, but the ablest and strongest. Laban envying Jacob's prosperity, repented of his bargain, and several times altered the agreement, which God still turned to Jacob's advantage. And now Jacob having been twenty years in Laban's service, he happened to overhear his brothers-in-law, Laban's sons, expressing their dissatisfaction that he had raised himself a large estate out of their fortunes; and having observed for some time Laban's coolness and indifference, he began to think of leaving him, and returning to his father's house, which God in a vision commanded him to do; but before he put this in execution, he thought it adviseable to consult his wives, and to obtain their consent to go along with him; and sending for them both into the field, that he might with more freedom and privacy discourse with them, he communicated his whole design to them; telling them he had observed, that their father's carriage of late towards him was very much changed; though he knew not for what cause; for he appealed to them concerning his fidelity and diligence, and their father's unfair dealing towards him, in deceiving him, and changing his wages so often: but God had turned all their father's contrivances against him to his advantage, and had taken away their father's cattle and given them to him. Then he told them that the Lord had lately appeared to him, and put him in mind of the vow he had made at Bethel, in his passage from Canaan thither, (of which he had formerly given them an account at his first coming,) and that the Lord had now commanded him to return to the land of his kindred. His wives having heard him very attentively, declared themselves of his opinion concerning their father, and consented to go with him, desiring him to set out when he pleased and they would attend him. Jacob therefore preparing all things for his journey, mounting his wives and children upon camels, set forward with all his cattle and goods which he had gotten in Haran, taking the advantage of the absence of his father-in-law, who was at that time gone to shear his sheep; which likewise gave Rachel an opportunity to steal and carry away his

Teraphim.\* Jacob passes the river Euphrates, and proceeds to Mount Gilead ; and though he had the advantage of three days before Laban pursued him, yet in seven days time Laban came up with him.

At his first setting out after Jacob, no doubt, Laban pursued him with a mind instigated by revenge ; but God, in a dream by night, charged him not so much as to speak roughly to Jacob. The next morning therefore, when he, with his kindred came to Jacob, he in soft and quiet words expostulated with him on the unhandsomeness of his behaviour in so slyly stealing away from him, carrying his daughters off like captives, and not suffering him to take leave of them or their children, and to send them away with an equipage becoming their rank ; telling him, it was very unadvisedly done of him to give such a provocation, considering it was in his power to have done

\* *Teraphim*. The word *Teraph* signifieth in general the complete image of a man, 1 Sam. xix. 13. More particularly it signifieth an idol or image made for private use in their own houses ; so that these images seem to have been their household gods ; “ Wherefore hast thou stolen my gods ? ”—My Teraphim, Gen. xxxi. 30. “ And the man Micah had an House of gods, and made an Ephod and Teraphim,” Judg. xvii. 5. Without controversy, the Teraphim which Michal put into the bed, 1 Sam. xix. 13. was a complete image of a man. The use of these images was to consult with them as with Oracles, concerning things unknown for the present, or future. To this purpose they were made by astrologers under certain constellations, capable of heavenly influences, as they pretended, whereby they were enabled to speak. “ The Teraphim have spoken vanity,” Zech. x. 2. And among other reasons why Rachel stole away her father’s images, this is thought to be one, that Laban might not, by consulting them, discover what way Jacob took in his flight.

• We add from another author the following account :

The Teraphim seem to have been compound images with several faces, like the Cherubim. Both are words of plural signification, and denote emblems of the Eternal Three in Covenant to redeem man : The Cherubim were for public use in the Tabernacle, the Teraphim for family or domestic use ; the emblems of that God before whom they daily worshipped. It is not certain that the use of these was unlawful in the time of Jacob ; but in process of time, they came to be abused, and were ordered to be laid aside.

him hurt ; nay, he plainly told him he would have done it, had not God appeared to him, and laid a restraint upon him. But Laban did not only chide Jacob for his unkindness, but charged him with theft, saying, “ Though thou hadst ever so strong a desire to return to thy father’s house, yet why didst thou steal my Teraphim ? ”

Jacob excused his clandestine departure from Laban, by telling him, he was afraid that if he had acquainted him with his purpose, he would forcibly have detained his daughters ; but as to the theft (not knowing that Rachel had stolen the Teraphim) he warmly replied, “ With whomsoever thou findest thy Teraphim, let him not live.” And to vindicate his innocency, he bids Laban search his goods in the presence of his friends ; and if he could find any thing of his he might take it. Upon this Laban searched the tents of Jacob, Leah, and the two handmaids ; and not finding what he looked for, went into Rachel’s tent. Rachel was hardly put to it, for she very well knew, that if the Idols should be found in her custody, both her father and her husband would be highly offended with her. She had but just time, whilst Laban was searching the other tents, to contrive how to conceal them, which she did by putting them into the camel’s furniture, and having set herself down upon them, Laban enters the tent ; whereupon keeping her seat, she begged his pardon for not rising to salute him, alledging for excuse, that the custom of women was upon her. Laban in point of modesty desists from any further search, not suspecting the deceit his daughter practised upon him ; upon which, Jacob very sharply reproached him for his unjust suspicion, appealing to Laban’s friends to judge between them. Then recounting the long servitude he had held him in, his faithfulness, care and diligence in his service ; the hardships he had undergone therein both by day and night, and the hard and unequal terms he had held him to all along, he concluded thus : “ Except the God of my father had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away empty : but God hath seen my affliction, and the labour of mine hands, and rebuked thee yester-night.”

This charge of Jacob's was so just that Laban could make no defence; and thought best to decline the debate; then, changing his resentment to expressions of fondness, he calls Jacob, his wives, children, and all that he had, *his*, and pretending for that reason he would not hurt them, lest therein he should hurt himself, he proposed a covenant of peace between them, which they made by erecting a pillar or heap of stones for a memorial of it, and then mutually exchanged an oath, that neither of them should invade the other, and that Jacob should not misuse his wives. After this, Jacob gave them an entertainment, and next morning Laban having embraced his daughters and their children, returned home.

This rencounter had not a little ruffled Jacob's mild disposition; and therefore God to comfort and confirm him in an assurance of the divine protection, was graciously pleased to send his angels,\* who met him on the way: Which Jacob observing said, "This is God's host."

No sooner is one storm blown over, but another begins to threaten. Jacob being now near the confines of Edom, begins to recollect that he was within the reach of his incensed brother Esau, whom he had highly provoked, and whom he formerly left in a very revengeful humour; and considering that in all this time (which was twenty years) he had received no account from his mother of the abatement of his brother's resentment, of which, if she perceived it, she had promised† to inform

\* *Angels.* Interpreters conclude these to be two hosts or armies of angels; whereof one was that of the Guardian Angel of Mesopotamia, who with his company conducted Jacob safely to the confines of Canaan; where the Guardian Angel of Canaan with his company received him into their care. And this is inferred from the necessity of Jacob's being exposed to the dangerous treachery of Laban, and the cruelty of Esau, which made Providence more particularly careful of Jacob, to whom the promises were made. And considering the etymology of the word *Mabanaïm*, (which signifies two armies or camps) there is probable ground for this conjecture of the interpreters and others.

† *Promised.* See Gen. xxvii. 45.



him, he thought it adviseable to send a conciliatory message to him, to discover the state of his mind before he ventured to approach him. Jacob therefore instructing the messengers, ordered them to address themselves to him in these words: "Thy servant Jacob saith thus; I have sojourned with Laban, and staid there till now; where I have exceedingly enriched myself, and now I have sent to acquaint my lord\* with this, that I may find favour in thy sight." The messengers set out, and soon returned, giving Jacob such information, as occasioned prodigious alarm; for they brought no answer from Esau, but only told Jacob that his brother Esau was coming to meet him at the head of four hundred men. Jacob immediately concludes from the number of the men, that his brother came against him with a hostile intention, which threw him into great distraction of thought: He was too weak to resist him; and his retinue too heavy and cumbersome to retreat; at length he comes to this resolution, namely, to divide his company and cattle into two bands; which being placed at a convenient distance, he hoped that if Esau should fall upon one of them, the other might have opportunity to escape.

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\* *Lord*. Since Isaac by divine direction had made Jacob lord over Esau, it may be asked how Jacob should call Esau his lord, and himself his servant? To which it may be answered, that by this submission Jacob did not reject the honour and dominion conferred by God upon him; but patiently waiting for the execution of God's will, he kept himself within the bounds of nature, and revered Esau as his elder brother. Besides, it may be questioned whether Jacob meant any more by these words [*Lord and Servant*,] than what was customarily used at that time, especially by those, who wished to ingratiate themselves with others. That the first use of the word *Lord* between man and man, was a mere honorary complement, and practised first among the idolatrous and heathen nations, appears from the children of Heth, (who were heathens) calling Abraham *Lord* and *Prince*; and from them came to be taken up and used by the Fathers and people of God afterwards, as many things besides were contracted by conversing with them. However, it is plain here, that Jacob through fear of Esau used the words, thinking that he might thereby soften the rugged humour of his haughty brother.

This was Jacob's human contrivance ; but his safety lay in that divine protection, which he had lately in similar distress experienced, when his uncle Laban pursued him. Therefore, as then, so now he addresses himself to God in this earnest supplication. "O God of my father  
" Abraham and Isaac, who saidst to me, return to thy  
" country and I will do well by thee : I am not worthy of  
" the least of thy mercies ; but thou hast increased my  
" stock ; for when I first passed over this river, I had no-  
" thing but my staff, and now I am become a multitude :  
" Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother,  
" for I fear his malice, lest he smite me and mine. Re-  
" member how thou saidst, I will surely do thee good,  
" and make thy posterity as the sand of the sea, which  
" cannot be numbered for multitude." Having thus im-  
plored the Divine Protection, he bethinks himself of another expedient to soften his brother's resentment. He might perhaps imagine that his brother looked upon his first message as a mere compliment, an empty piece of formality ; and therefore, since he had by his messengers acquainted his brother that he was become so rich, he resolves to send him a very handsome present ; but fearing, lest he should be attacked before the present could arrive, he was obliged to take it of that which came first to hand ; which was thus : Two hundred she-goats, and twenty he-goats ; two hundred ewes, and twenty rams ; thirty milch-camels with their colts ; forty kine, and ten bulls ; and twenty she-asses, with ten ass-foles ; all in separate droves ; ordering the servants to keep them at a reasonable distance, charging the servant that followed the first drove to deliver the present to his brother ; the same order he delivered to each of the rest ; hoping that the sight of so many and different presents, delivered in a submissive and obliging manner, might have a pacific effect on the rugged disposition of his brother.

The same night, he with his wives and children passed the brook Jabbock, himself being the last ; and being left alone, there appeared to him a man, who wrestled with

him till it was day, and permitted Jacob to prevail; but that he might be sensible he did not prevail by his own strength, he gave him a touch in the hollow of his thigh, and put the joint out.

Then said the man, "Let me go, for day breaketh." But Jacob said, "I will not let thee go till thou hast blessed me." The man then asking him his name, and he saying it was Jacob, "Thy name, (replied the other) shall not only be Jacob, but likewise Israel:\* For as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed." Jacob demanded his name, which he declined telling him; he therefore blessed him and departed. Jacob, as the sun arose, passing from the place where he had this wrestling exercise, called it Peniel, which signifies the face of God; "Because (said he) I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."†

After this Jacob proceeded on his Journey, and had not gone far before he perceived his brother Esau ap-

\* *Israel.* It is said Gen. xxxii. 28. "Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel;" But as the Patriarch was frequently called by the name of Jacob after this period, the passage may be translated, *Not only* Jacob, but *Israel*, which prevents the appearance of contradiction.

† *Preserved.* The angel with whom Jacob wrestled, seems to have been the great Angel of the Covenant, who frequently visited the ancient saints in a human form. This divine person seemed to oppose Jacob's entrance into Canaan, but permits him to contest the matter, and at length to prevail. The victory was yielded; but the conqueror had a memento of his weakness, in his thigh being put out of joint, or injured in such a manner that he always retained the effects of it, as a standing memorial of the transaction. The children of Jacob have also perpetuated the remembrance of it; by abstaining, in their food, from that sinew or muscle in the animal, by which the hip-bone is fixed in its cup.

The new name, "Israel," which Jacob obtained on this occasion, was highly honourable; he "prevailed with God," by the importunity of his prayer, and obtained "the blessing"—a repetition, probably, and an enlargement of the blessing originally given by his father, including a promise that "he should prevail with men also," which certainly assured him of good success in the expected and dreaded interview with his brother Esau. That it was a Divine Person who appeared to Jacob at this time, is incontestable, for he says, "I have seen God, face to face."



proaching, attended by four hundred men; upon which he began to dispose his company into the most commodious order, either for the reception of his brother, or safety of those he most regarded. Putting therefore the two handmaids Bilhah and Zilpah with their children foremost, and Leah with her children next; he set his beloved Rachel and her son Joseph in the rear, and himself passed on before. When he was come near, he bowed himself seven times to the ground; but Esau, unable to resist the powerful impression which Jacob's meek submission made upon his spirit, with eager joy runs to meet him, falls upon his neck, and kisses him: Revenge and murderous designs are turned into pity and tenderness; and Esau, who once thirsted after his brother's blood, now melts into tears of joy at this happy interview, and nothing but expressions of brotherly love and friendship pass between them.

Esau, transported with joy at the sight of Jacob, with pleasure surveys his store, and is with great difficulty persuaded to accept of a present. He salutes his wives and children; and to shew further marks of his reconciliation and fondness, offers to bear him company the remaining part of his journey. But Jacob, still retaining his former jealousy, excused himself, by telling him, that the children and cattle could not keep pace with him, without much fatigue, and therefore desired him to proceed, and himself would follow, leisurely, as the children and flocks could bear; and that he would wait on him in his own country\* of Seir. Then Esau very courteously offered to leave some of his men to guard and attend him; but Jacob handsomely excused it as an unnecessary compliment. Upon which they parted in a friendly manner;

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\* *Country*—It may reasonably be supposed that Jacob never intended to meet Esau in Seir; because it doth not appear, that he ever did go thither. Besides, it is probable that he might apprehend himself not safe in his brother's dominions, who might there take occasion to renew his former grudge, and in revenge destroy or enslave both himself and his family.



Esau\* taking his way towards Seir, and Jacob by easy journeys travelling to Succoth; where, intending to abide for some time, he built a temporary habitation, and conveniences to shelter his cattle.

Afterwards he removed to Shalem, a city of Shechem; where, having bought a piece of ground of the children of Hamor, † for a hundred pieces‡ of money, he spread his tent, and erected an altar there, and called upon the name of the Mighty God of Israel.

During Jacob's stay in this place, his only daughter Dinah, prompted by her vanity and love of pleasure, ventured, imprudently, among "the daughters of the land;" and while thus indulging a dangerous curiosity, she happened to attract the notice of Shechem, the son of Hamor, Prince of that place, to whose violent lust, she, unhappily, became a prey. This prince however, notwithstanding the commission of such a criminal action, was so strongly attached to her, as to be earnestly desirous of forming a more honourable union; and therefore importunately intreats his father to enter upon a treaty with her friends, that he might obtain her for his wife. Jacob soon heard of the violence committed upon his daughter; and was deeply penetrated with grief for the sin of his child, and the shame brought on his family; he however concealed his emotions till his sons were

\* *Esau.* Moses gives no further account of Esau and his family, only that he had three wives, Aholibamah, and Ada, Canaanites; and Basemath the daughter of Ishmael. That the first had three children, Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah; the second had Eliphaz, and the third Reuel; and that he left the land of Canaan to reside on the mountains of Seir. Moses names the descendants of Eliphaz and Reuel, and the princes of the tribes of the Edomites, the kings that succeeded them, and the chiefs who governed after the kings. See Gen. xxxvi. and xxxv. 29.

† *Hamor.* St. Stephen in Acts vii. 16. calls this man Emmor.

‡ *Pieces of Money.* This is sometimes rendered an hundred lambs, because the image of a lamb was stamped upon it.

come home; who, being informed of the painful event, were extremely incensed, and secretly resolved upon exemplary vengeance.

Hamor's partiality for his son Shechem makes him soon yield to his importunity: taking the opportunity therefore when Jacob and his sons were together, he acquaints them with his son's passion for Dinah; intreating them to give her to him; and inviting them to intermarry with his people, offered them the freedom of the country, to dwell, trade, and form settlements among them. And to enforce these proposals, Shechem (who was present at the treaty) offers them whatever advantages they pleased to ask, bidding them name their terms, and they should have them, provided they would but give him their sister. Jacob's sons neglect no opportunity of revenging the affront done their family by this affair: Therefore, carefully observing the earnestness of Shechem and his father to close with them, they insist upon the more high and unreasonable terms. Nothing less than a general circumcision of the Shechemites will induce them to accept of an agreement to settle among and incorporate with them.

Hamor and Shechem readily agree to these conditions; and when they returned to the town, summoning their subjects together, commend the Israelites for a peaceable good-natured people; and that if they intermarried with them, they should soon become masters of all their substance, which was very considerable; and all this to be obtained upon their consent to be circumcised. The thirst of gain soon prevailed upon this silly people; and being backed with Shechem's interest among them, which was very great, they all consented, and were, every male of them, circumcised.

Jacob's sons having thus disguised their resentment, in deluding the unwary Shechemites, the third day\* after

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\* *Third Day.* This was the time, as physicians observe, when fevers generally attend circumcision, occasioned by the inflammation of the wound, and which

they were circumcised, put their bloody purpose in execution. Simeon\* and Levi put themselves at the head of the party that was to attack the city, which they boldly entered, and put all the men to the sword; and searching Shechem's house, they found their sister Dinah. After this, they fell to plunder, and carried off not only what they found in the city, but all that was in the field, making the women and children prisoners; and what they could not carry off, they spoiled. Thus the sons of Jacob glutted their revenge upon the Shechemites for the rape of their sister.

Peaceful Jacob knew nothing of this bloody massacre, till it was over; and when his sons brought the trophies of their cruelty to him, he took no joy in their conquest; and was so far from approving this rash action, that he reproaches them for their barbarity, and expresses his apprehension of the consequences, which might be fatal to himself and his whole family. But his two boisterous sons, Simeon and Levi, who had been the ring-leaders in this mischief, took upon them to answer their father for what they had done, saying Shechem ought not to have used their sister like a harlot, by which he had dishonoured not only her, but their whole family.

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was more painful than, as the Hebrews observed, than at any other time, for which reason the sons of Jacob took that opportunity of falling on the Shechemites, who were then less able to defend themselves.

\* *Simeon.* In this action none are named but Simeon and Levi, whom we may suppose to be the chief contrivers and managers of this bloody massacre, as being own brothers to Dinah both by father and mother, and elder than the rest, except Reuben, who was of a more gentle and humane disposition; (as we find in Gen. xxxvii. 22. when he saved poor Joseph's life, contrary to the will of his other cruel brothers;) yet it is reasonable to think, that the rest of the sons of Jacob, who were old enough for such an exploit, and their numerous servants also, were engaged in this execution; though these two only are named. And indeed it is impossible that two men should be able to master a city, and slay all the men in it, (though at that time disabled in some measure,) and should also take all the women prisoners, who were more than sufficient to over-power two men.

It is plain that Jacob's fear was not groundless, by the care God took to remove him from the danger that must necessarily have attended this cruel and inhospitable action of his inconsiderate sons. For though they had extirpated one colony, there were more people in the neighbouring country, who, either in defence of themselves, or in revenge for such unjustifiable conduct, might give Jacob great uneasiness, if not totally destroy him. God therefore to secure him, bid him arise and go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and erect an altar in that place to God, who had appeared to him, to comfort and strengthen him, when he fled from the face of his brother Esau, whom then he dreaded, as much as now he feared the people of this country.

In obedience to the divine call, Jacob strictly charges his family and all that belonged to him, to put away the strange gods\* which they had, and be clean,† and change their garments; and then, said he, let us arise, and go up to Bethel, the House of God. By these means Jacob obtained from them their idols and their ear-rings.‡ And that these ear-rings might not become a snare to him and his family, as the like were afterwards to Gideon,§ Jacob resolved to make sure of them, as well as of the idols; and therefore he buried them so pri-

\* *Gods.* These probably were some idols which his sons had got among the spoils of the Shechemites: or some of his servants or slaves might be idolaters.

† *Clean, &c.* This may probably be meant of sanctifying themselves, not only from idolatrous pollution, but from the late massacre at Shechem. See Exod. xix. 10. and 15. But that it was a custom for those who came to appear before the Lord to wash their clothes, appears plainly from Exod. xix. 10. Levit. xv. 13. and 2 Sam. xii. 20.

‡ *Ear-rings.* These were worn by some people in a superstitious devotion, as being thought to possess some magical virtue or charm in them; and it is not unlikely, that some of Jacob's servants, if they themselves were not Ishmaelites, might have taken up the use of ear-rings from the Ishmaelites, amongst whom it was afterwards a known fashion. Judges viii. 24.

§ *Gideon.* See Judges viii. 27.



vately, that none of his family should know where they were, to take them up again; for he hid them under the oak of Shechem; and then set forward for Bethel, whither he proceeded in great quiet and security; for God had struck such a terror into the cities round about him, that notwithstanding the provocation his sons had given by the outrage they had committed at Shechem, no person offered to molest or pursue them.

Being safely arrived at Bethel, he erected an altar there as God had commanded him: and upon that altar, and at that time, it is supposed he performed the vow, which he had made when God appeared to him in the same place, as he fled from his brother\* Esau. Which when he had performed; God appeared to him again, confirmed his new name Israel to him, and gave him repeated assurances of his promises made to Abraham and Isaac, with new blessings to himself. Then did Jacob, in the place where God had now talked with him, erect a pillar of stone, as a lasting monument of his gratitude and devotion, pouring a drink offering and oil upon it. In this place, and about this time, Deborah,† Jacob's mother's nurse, died, and was buried under an oak, which was therefore called "The Oak of Weeping."

Jacob makes no long stay here; but, prompted by filial affection, he hastened to Mamre, to pay a visit to his aged father; and Ephrath‡ being in the way, they intended to have got thither: but though they were only a short distance from the town, they found themselves un-

\* *Brother.* See Gen. xxviii. 20, 22.

† *Deborah.* Who this Deborah was, and for what reason she is mentioned here is not clear, and hath given occasion for various conjectures among commentators. Some are of opinion, that after she had brought her mistress Rebecca to her marriage, and seen her well settled in her family, she went back to Haran again, and there dwelt in Laban's house, till Jacob returning home, she having a desire once more to see her old mistress put herself into the company. Without doubt she was very much respected by them, because they bewailed her death so much, that the oak, under which she was buried was called the *Oak of Weeping.*

‡ *Ephrath.* This place was afterwards called Bethlehem.

able to reach it, for Rachel, then pregnant with her second and last child, fell into labour, and during her extremity, which was uncommonly great, the Midwife to encourage her, said, "Fear not, for thou shalt have this son also." Of whom indeed she was delivered, but she died immediately; and just before her departure, she called the child's name "Benoni," which signifies "The Son of Sorrow:" But his father, unwilling to perpetuate the sad remembrance of so sorrowful a subject, called him "Benjamin," which signifies "The son of my right-hand:" Intimating thereby how dear he should be to him.

Jacob thus deprived of his beloved Rachel, raises a monument \* over her grave to perpetuate her memory. Her death was no doubt an occasion of great grief to Jacob, whose fondness may be measured by the double servitude he underwent to obtain her: But before he could reach Mamre, a greater misfortune befel him; for Reuben, his eldest son, committed incest with Bilhah, his father's concubinary wife. Jacob soon heard of it; and though he took no public notice of it at that time; yet it dwelt deeply on his mind, and never forsook him to his dying day.†

\* *Monument.* Bochart says this was a very curiously wrought pyramid, on the basis of which were disposed twelve very large stones, hinting the number of his sons. In this we see the antiquity of erecting monuments and epitaphs in memory of the dead near the place of their burial; of which this of Rachel is the first that we read of in holy Scripture. Thus Simon Machabeus erected a magnificent monument over the grave of his father and brothers. And St. Jerom, in his epistle to Marcella, says, that he himself had performed his devotions at David's sepulchre, of which St. Peter, Acts ii. 29. says, "And his Sepulchre is still among us."

† *Dying day.* Jacob, just before his death, giving his blessing among his children, gave Reuben a reproachful hint of his incestuous crime; "Reuben," says he, "Thou art my first born, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power." This was to have been his portion, by virtue of his birth-right had he not by transgression forfeited it. But now, being as "unstable as water," (which though elevated ever so high, falls down again) his doom was, "Thou shalt not excel, because thou wentest up to thy father's bed,

These two afflictions sat heavy upon him for a time ; but continuing his resolution of visiting his father, the expectation of seeing the good old man kindled a new joy in his heart. At length he reached Mamre, the city of Arbath,\* where his grandfather Abraham had formerly lived, and where his father Isaac then dwelt ; who (no doubt) was overjoyed at the return of his son Jacob, after so long an absence : nor could pious Jacob's joy be less, to find his aged father living, and in health.

Jacob had not long enjoyed the blessing of his good father's company, before another severe affliction befell him, so chequered is the life of man ! His son Joseph, being about seventeen years old, was with his brethren feeding the flock ; and Joseph, observing their wicked conversation, told tales† of them to his father. This set their hearts very much against him, for they could not but look upon him as a spy upon them, and therefore resolved to remove him : and what aggravated their impious rage, was the marks of extraordinary love which his father shewed to him more than to all his other children ; which partiality was occasioned probably, not only by his being the eldest son of his beloved Rachel, but because he was wise‡ beyond his years. This was indeed an en-

and defiled it," Gen. xlix. 3, 4. So Reuben's birth-right was transferred to Judah, of whom our Lord was to come, (ver. 8.) from whom also in time it fell to the son of Rachel, who in right should have been Jacob's first wife.

\* *Arbath.* This was afterwards called Hebron.

† *Tales.* What crime it was that occasioned Joseph to tell tales of them to his father, is the subject of conjecture among the critics. But whatever it was, it may be gathered from their malice to him that it was no small crime, because they hated him, even to death.

‡ *Wise, &c.* Or, *that he was wise as a senator.* The versions do not seem to have well expressed the reason for which Jacob loved Joseph more than his brethren, by these words, "because he was the son of his old age," Gen. xxxvii. 3. For if his love had been only founded on this reason, he must have loved Zebulun as well as Joseph, since he was of the same age ; and he must have loved Benjamin still more, since he was born sixteen years after Joseph. The Hebrew text says only "because he was the son of the elders or senators," that is, because he

gaging quality; and the fond father to express his greater esteem for it than any endowment in all his other children, distinguishes Joseph from the rest of his brethren by bestowing on him a fine vest of several colours, little thinking it would occasion such discontent among them. This note of distinction so much displeased Jacob's other sons, that they could not shew the least good temper to the favourite, but studied all the ways that malice could invent to make him uneasy: And that which enhanced their hatred to him was, Joseph's two dreams, which he very innocently related to them, not suspecting so severe a resentment from them as he afterwards found. The first was; "That his brethren and he were binding sheaves together in the field, his sheaf arose and stood upright, and their sheaves round about fell down before his." His brethren looking on him with scorn replied, "Shalt thou reign over us?"

His second dream was a fresh aggravation of their rancour, which the harmless youth, in his childish simplicity, likewise tells them: "I have seen (says he) the sun, the moon, and eleven stars fall down before me." Nor could he conceal this dream from his father, (so strongly was the heavenly impulse upon him) but told it him. Good old Jacob, whether to mitigate the resentment of his other sons towards Joseph, or that he thought these dreams the effect of an aspiring and conceited forwardness in him, chid him, saying, "Shall I, and thy mother and thy brethren pay homage to thee?"

These two dreams of Joseph, however, were very significant; and though his father was willing thus to make light of them, that they might give less offence to his brethren, yet they made a deep impression on Jacob's mind. And now, whilst the envious brothers were rumi-

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was their disciple, in the style of the Hebrews, and therefore the Samaritan, Persian, and Arabic versions, and the Chaldee paraphrase render, "because he was a wise and prudent son:" And it seems that they might be yet better translated, by saying, *That he was wise as a Senator*, wisdom being a quality which makes parents fond of their children, and prefer them to their brethren.



nating on revenge, a fatal opportunity offered itself, and the pious parent becomes the instrument of delivering his darling into their implacably malicious hands. The ten brethren being gone to feed their flocks at a distance in Shechem, old Israel, out of his paternal care, desirous to know of their welfare, sends his beloved Joseph to see and acquaint them with their father's anxiety for their health. Joseph, in ready obedience, goes to Shechem; and not finding them there, wandered about, till a stranger directed him to Dothan, whither he went; and being come within sight of them, their malice which hitherto lay latent for want of opportunity, revived, and they immediately came to a fatal resolution to dispatch him. "See, (cried the unfeeling brothers) "where this dreamer comes! "Let us kill him, and bury him, and tell our father some "wild beast has devoured him; and then we shall see "what will become of his dreams." But Reuben, who was of a milder disposition than the rest, would not approve of this bloody contrivance, and studied to prevent it, dissuading them from shedding his blood, and proposing rather to cast him into a pit. The rest considering, that if he perished in the pit, it would answer their end, consented to Reuben's counsel. By this time the innocent youth, not in the least apprehensive of their wicked design on him, was come up to them; and as he was going to deliver his father's indulgent commendation to them, they seized and stripped him of his fine vest, and cast him into the pit, which at that time was dry and empty. Joseph extremely frightened at this vile and unnatural treatment, begged his life of his cruel brothers, for he knew he must inevitably perish with hunger there: But they are deaf to his cries, being resolutely bent to destroy him. Joseph in vain complains of his hard-hearted brothers, who are so regardless of him, that they had no sooner thus disposed of him, but they sat down and regaled themselves with what refreshments they had, whilst he was exposed to famine and despair. But Providence, the faithful guardian of a youth, designed for great events, had a watchful eye over him.

Before these unnatural brethren put Joseph into the pit, it was by Reuben's advice that they did not immediately dispatch him; and now another of them, namely Judah, begins to feel some pangs of conscience, which was awakened by the opportune approach of a company of Ishmaelites travelling from Gilead, and going down to Egypt with spicery and other merchandize.\* Judah lays hold of this opportunity, and considering with himself that Joseph was exposed to certain death in the pit, proposes to the rest to sell him to these merchants, urging the unnaturalness of being instrumental in the death of their own brother, which would bring an indelible stain of guilt upon them; but by selling him, they should not only save his life, but be gainers by the bargain. Considering this, they closed with the proposal; and taking Joseph out of the pit, notwithstanding his earnest intreaty, having no advocate for him amongst them, (for Reuben was absent) they sold him to the Ishmaelite merchants for twenty pieces of silver; and these, carrying him to Egypt, there sold him to Potiphar, an officer† of the King, and captain of his guards.

Reuben in persuading his brothers to put Joseph into the pit, contrived it on purpose to preserve his life, hoping he should find means to deliver him from thence; and when they had bestowed him there, on some occasion or other he pretended to leave them: but soon after returning, and not finding Joseph in the pit, he rent‡ his

\* The circumstance of the Ishmaelites trading to Egypt with spices deserves notice, as it is the first mention made in Scripture of the early attention of mankind to the commerce of the East.

† *Officer.* This is in the text called an Eunuch; which cannot be taken literally, but must refer to one employed in some high trust. It was the custom indeed, and still is in those parts, to commit the keeping of the queen, and women of quality to eunuchs; but Potiphar cannot be supposed to be such, for he had a wife, as we may see in the story of Joseph: Besides it was customary among the Eastern people to call their noblemen Eunuchs.

‡ *Rent.* This was the custom of those countries and times to express the highest grief; and of which, though afterwards more frequently used, this is the first instance we have.

clothes, and coming to his brethren, he cried out, "Alas!\*  
 "the child is gone; what will become of me, or whither  
 "shall I go?" But† they soon appeased him, acquainting  
 him with what they had done in his absence; and then  
 they began to contrive how to manage the matter to their  
 father, so as to take all suspicion from themselves; which  
 they did by dipping Joseph's vest in the blood of a kid,  
 and sent it to him, with this message, "This we have  
 "found; see whether it be thy son's coat or no." The  
 bloody garment too soon convinced Jacob to whom  
 it belonged; and not in the least suspecting any hu-  
 man creature could be guilty of such unnatural cruelty,  
 concludes some wild beast had devoured him. This was  
 the greatest trial that Jacob ever yet sustained; the loss  
 of his beloved Rachel, though the joy of his soul and de-  
 light of his eyes, was a debt due to nature, and which she  
 paid in a natural way; but the loss of Joseph far exceeded  
 all the rest: He is, as his father might reasonably sup-  
 pose, torn in pieces, barbarously mangled, and cut off  
 before his time. The disconsolate parent expresses his  
 grief after an unusual manner: He not only rent his  
 clothes, but put on sack-cloth,‡ and mourned a

\* *Alas!* Reuben having greatly offended his father before in his trespass with Bilhah his concubinary wife, and probably hoping to have regained his favour by preserving his favourite son, and restoring him safe to him, having now lost the hope of that advantage, and reasonably fearing that his father's displeasure would fall heaviest on him, both as he was offended with him already, and as he being the eldest, should have taken most care of the younger, was exceedingly troubled for the loss of Joseph.

† *But, &c.* Here the story in the text seems to break off abruptly; but it must be supposed in parity of reason, that he joined with them in contriving to take the suspicion off to their father of having murdered their brother, and consequently that they had acquainted him with the selling of Joseph in his absence.

‡ *Sackcloth.* Reuben, as we have hinted before, was the first we find who to express excessive sorrow rent his clothes, which Jacob not only does (though it cannot be supposed in imitation of Reuben, for that undoubtedly was concealed

long time for his beloved Joseph : and when his guilty sons offered to comfort him, he rejected them, declaring that he would never cease mourning as long as he lived.

But here we must for a while leave Joseph, that we may take notice of some intermediate occurrences. About the time that this affliction befel old Israel, his son Judah had committed a great fault in marrying a Canaanitish\* woman, by whom he had three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah; the occasion of which was a visit he made to Hirah the Adullamite, with whom he had contracted a friendship, which proved a snare to him : for being at Hirah's house, he fell in love with the daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah, and married her, and by her he had three sons above-mentioned. In process of time, when Er his eldest son was grown marriageable, he took a wife for him whose name was Tamar: But Er proving a wicked man in the sight of God, however he might appear to men, God cut† him off; after which, Judah bids his second son Onan marry his brother's widow, that the family might not fail for want of issue. Young Onan knowing that if Tamar should bear him any children, the eldest would inherit in the name‡ of his

from him,) but clothes himself with sackcloth, a sort of coarse ordinary habit, used afterwards by the Israelites in mourning; of which custom this is the first instance on record.

\* *Canaanitish*. See Gen. xxxviii. 2. The transgression of Judah in marrying this woman led him into a greater afterwards; which was not fully completed till after Joseph was sold, and gone into Egypt; and therefore Moses deferred the first part of it, that he might give the story entire together.

† *Cut*, &c. What sort of death he, and afterwards his brother, died, is not mentioned by Moses. It is however generally supposed that they did not die a natural death, but for their extraordinary iniquities were taken off by God in an extraordinary manner.

‡ This was long before the Law, by which it was afterwards enjoined, Deut. xxv. 5. and yet though this be the first mention we have of it, it seems it was then a known custom and well understood by Onan. For he knew that the issue should not be his, but that the first-born of such marriage should be reputed his deceased brother's, and bear his name, as was afterwards declared, Deut. xxv. 6.



elder brother that was dead, and not be accounted as his, seemingly obeyed his father by going to Tamar's apartment; but he complied only apparently with the will of his father, and by undue means avoided the fruits of marriage. This criminal conduct was so displeasing to God, that he removed him in anger as he had done his brother.

The third son, whose name was Shelah, was too young; therefore Judah desired his daughter-in-law Tamar to retire to her father's house, and to continue a widow till his son Shelah was grown up, and then he should marry her. Tamar did so, and waited till Shelah was come to man's estate; but finding no performance of Judah's promise, she resents this neglect, and resolves to be revenged. Watching a time therefore when her father-in-law went to Timnah to divert and comfort himself for the death of his wife, with his friend Hirah, she disguised herself in the habit of a harlot, and planted herself in the way that she knew Judah must unavoidably pass to go to Timnah.\* Judah seeing her, an unlawful fire soon kindled in his breast, and concluding her to be what she seemed, addressed himself to her. She was as forward to receive him, as he was to offer his service; but she had previously resolved to make sure the terms of his entertainment. He promised her a kid; but she having a further design upon him, demands a security for the performance of his promise, which they agree to be his ring or signet, his staff and cloak,† and to be deposited in her hands till he

\* Some expositors conjecture that Tamar being proselyted to the true religion, her design in laying this snare for her father-in-law, arose from a desire to be brought into the line of Christ's ancestors, and consequently, of having children by some of Judah's family, some intimation having probably been given that our Lord should spring from Judah; therefore not expecting to be married to Shelah, she saw no other way but by a connexion with Judah. If these were her motives, though they by no means excuse her conduct, she certainly obtained her object; for the Messiah descended from her by this very intercourse.

† *Cloak.* Commentators and versions differ much about this part of the pledge which Judah gave to Tamar. Our translations call it a bracelet: but this is

sent the kid. An unlawful commerce between them taking place, the pregnancy of Tamar was the consequence. Judah retiring, she staid not long behind him ; but taking the pledge, went home with them, and dressed herself in her widow's weeds. In the mean time Judah going to the flock, took a kid, and sent it by his friend Hirah to redeem his pledge : But Hirah not finding her, returned and told Judah ; who thinking it best for his reputation to make no further enquiry after her, said, " Let her keep the pledge, I will inquire no more after her, lest I expose myself."

About three months after this, Judah was informed that his daughter-in-law had played the harlot, and was with child. He, resenting the dishonour done to his family, not considering his own late folly, rashly passes sentence on her unheard, ordering her to be brought out and burnt.\* But Tamar producing the pledge, sent them to Judah with this message, That he should consider well what he did, for the owner of the pledge was the man by whom she was with child. Judah finding himself thus detected, owned the pledge, and reflecting on himself for

not very probable, for it is not clear, that in those days the men of Israel wore bracelets. Some, as Junius and Tremellius, render it by *sudarium*, an handkerchief. Others suppose it to be the *mileta* or *turban* ; but this is improbable also. Indeed our translation of 1610, renders it a *cloak*, and seems to take it from the Septuagint, which call it *Hormiskon*, from the Greek word *bormos*, which signifies a shoulder ; and this seems the most likely of any.

\* *Burnt*. As for the crime of adultery, of which Tamar was condemned, and of which on her side she was guilty, (for she was espoused to Shelah) it was capital, being punishable with death ; but by what right or authority her father-in-law passed sentence upon her is the question. The ancients agree in supposing every one to be judge or chief magistrate in his own family ; and though Tamar was a Canaanite, yet as she had married into Judah's family, and brought that disgrace upon it, she was within the cognizance of him ; who may be supposed (by what followed) to have suspended the sentence, if he had first enquired into the cause of her being with child. But however, as one well observes, Judah in this truly personated the hypocrite, who would be severe against those very sins in others, which he allows in himself.

the injustice he had done her, in not giving her to his son Shelah as he had promised, excused her, declaring she was more righteous\* than he was, thereby taking the whole blame upon himself.

The time of her delivery being come, she proved with child of twins; one of which putting forth his hand, the midwife tied a scarlet thread about it, to distinguish him for the first born; but he drawing his hand back, his brother came before him into the world: whereupon he was called Pharez, which signifies a breach; and the other with the thread on his hand was called Zarah. Thus† instead of the son raising up issue to the deceased brother, the father raiseth issue to his deceased son; but he conversed no more with her afterwards.

In the beginning of Joseph's story, his grandfather Isaac was alive and in health, who lived longer than any since Terah, being an hundred and eighty years old when he died, which was in the year of the world 2288, and was buried by his sons Esau and Jacob in the cave that is

\* *Righteous.* He does not say that Tamar was more holy or chaste; but more righteous or just: because Tamar had sinned more grievously in this fact, it being adultery as well as incest in her, but fornication and incest in him. Nevertheless she was juster than he in this respect; for Judah not keeping his promise in marrying her to Shelah, provoked her to lay this trap for him, resolving since he would not let her have children by Shelah, she would have them by him. And thus Tamar may be said to be more wicked before God, but more just before Judah.

† *Thus, &c.* Though this latter part of Judah's story relating to the incest with his daughter Tamar, was acted after Joseph was sold, and while he was in Egypt; yet the former part of it relating to his marriage with Shuah's daughter, and the birth of his three sons by her, must have happened before Joseph was sold. For there being but two and twenty, or at the most three and twenty years, between Joseph's being sold into Egypt, and Jacob's going thither to him; it could not be, that in so short a space, Judah could marry a wife, have three sons at three several births by her, marry two of those sons successively to one woman, defer the marriage of the third son, beyond the due time, afterwards himself have sons by the same woman, (his daughter-in-law) and one of those sons, Pharez, beget two sons, Hezron and Hamul, Gen. xlvi. 12. before Jacob went down to Egypt.

in the field of Macpelah, near Mamre, which Abraham had bought of Ephron the Hittite for a burying-place.\*

We will now return to Joseph; of whom the last account that we gave was, that he was sold to Potiphar captain of the king of Egypt's guard, who was not a little pleased with his bargain, when he found what a faithful slave he had bought: and that which advanced Joseph still higher in his master's favour was, that he was sensible that the Lord made every thing to prosper that he undertook. Prosperity and faithfulness are endearing qualities in all, but chiefly in a servant; which recommended Joseph so much to Potiphar, that, as it were, dismissing himself from any farther trouble, he made him steward over his house, leaving his whole estate, within and without doors, to his care and management; by which he drew a blessing upon all that he had.

Joseph, thus happily placed, might reasonably expect to lead a comfortable life, though in slavery, and might hope for liberty as the reward of his faithful and advantageous service. But his virtue must undergo some severe trials before he can assure himself of an established state of peace and tranquillity.

Joseph possessed a most beautiful form, to which his early years added a female sweetness, as his sex did a manly grace. His charms were not long unregarded; for his master's wife soon became enamoured of him; and after all the intimations of her desire to draw the virtuous youth into a wanton familiarity with her had failed, and her eager

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\* *Burying-place.* At what time Rebecca, Isaac's wife died, is not mentioned any where in the Scriptures; only it is said in Gen. xlix. 30, 31. that she was buried in the same place where her husband was. But the Rabbins hold, that she died in the hundred and thirty-seventh year of her age, which was the hundred and fifty-sixth of her husband's, a year before Jacob left Laban. By which computation she must have been nineteen years old when she married Isaac at forty. But surely if she were so old when she died, Deborah her nurse must have needs lived to a great age, who outlived her, and yet must be supposed to have been older than she when she undertook to be her nurse.



passion became more violent than ever, she resolved to break through the rules of her sex, and court him in the plainest terms.

It was not long before an opportunity offered; the busy fiend, Lust, seldom failing to assist his servants. Potiphar being one day absent upon duty, and the rest of the servants disposed at a distance about their work, none but the handsome Hebrew and his lascivious mistress were in the house. Her base passion had often put her on contrivances to indulge it; at last this opportunity offered, which she as readily embraced, and shamelessly solicited him to uncleanness. This, from one of her sex and quality, was a great surprize to our virtuous youth, who knew no other way of dealing with her, than first to expostulate on the heinousness of the crime, and then give her a positive denial. “You see that my Master (says he) hath trusted me with his whole fortune and the management of it, so that he knows not what is in the house, and has reserved nothing to himself but you, who are his wife: With what face then can I be so ungrateful to him who hath promoted me, and reposed so much confidence in me, as to violate his bed and offend my God?” Joseph hoped this repulse would have mortified her lewd desire; but she grows more impatient, and seizing the present opportunity caught him by the cloak in order to detain him. But he was determined to renounce his office, his reputation, and even his life, rather than provoke his God: “he therefore left his garment in her hand,” and fled from the dangerous scene.

We cannot but admire this singular triumph of chastity; and though “men of the world” may affect to despise it, and plead for the gratification of all their sensual desires, we consider this instance of the grace of God, in a young man, as intended to prove, that however dangerous our circumstances may be, however strong our temptations, yet, if our hearts are established in the fear of God, he is able to deliver us from all assaults, and to make us to say in the midst of danger, as Joseph did, “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God!”

Despairing now of ever obtaining her desire, and fearing a discovery of her lewd passion, being agitated by revenge, she resolves to prevent his accusing her by making the first charge against him; and therefore politically making a pretended outcry, and holding Joseph's garment in her hand, some of the servants who were nearest the house ran in to her assistance. "See (said she) how my Lord hath encouraged an Hebrew\* to expose us to scorn and infamy!" This she spoke with design to set them against Joseph, (because the Egyptians hated the Hebrews) and to engage them to take part with her, if Joseph should insist on his innocence. Then craftily going on with her story she told them, that he came in to force her; but she crying out, he ran away, and left his cloak. Having thus prepared the servants to second her charge against Joseph, she laid up his cloak as an evidence, against her Lord's return. Potiphar being come home, she flies to him with tears, and makes her complaint to him of Joseph's insolence in the most aggravating expressions. The credulous husband, not in the least suspecting the treachery of his wife, and considering the circumstance of the cloak, without examining Joseph's virtue, inflamed with rage and jealousy, commits him, without further inquiry, to the royal prison.

Joseph thus distressed in a strange land, without friend or relation to plead his cause, soon finds the comfortable effect of an innocent mind, while the providence of God was extended towards him in a manner peculiarly favourable, making his imprisonment the means of his future greatness; for Joseph by his harmless and engaging deportment, grew into such favour with his keeper, that he committed all the prisoners to his care, and all things in the prison were managed by his order and direction; the jailor was sensible that God prospered him, and he

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\* *Hebrew.* She called Joseph not by his own name, but by the name of his people, [an Hebrew] to set them the more against him; for the Egyptians hated the Hebrews.

was now overseer of the prison, as he had been before of Potiphar's house.

While Joseph was a prisoner, it happened that the king's chief butler and baker were committed to the same prison where Joseph was confined, and the keeper charging Joseph with the care of them, he waited on them himself; by which means he became acquainted with them. In one and the same night, while they were in prison, these two officers dreamed each of them a dream. Joseph coming into their apartment in the morning, and finding them both dejected, demanded the cause of their uneasiness. They readily answered, and told him, that they had each dreamed a dream that night, and being under confinement they had no opportunity of getting their dreams interpreted. Joseph endeavouring to remove from their minds that superstitious notion of trusting to diviners, or soothsayers, (which was very common to the Egyptians) informed them, that interpretations belonged to God, and desired to know their dreams. The butler told him he dreamt he saw a vine, which had three branches, that by degrees budded, then blossomed, and at last bore ripe grapes; that he held Pharaoh's cup in his hand, squeezed out the juice of the grapes, and gave it to Pharaoh to drink. Joseph no sooner heard the butler's dream, than he gave him a positive interpretation of it. The three branches, says he, signify three days; within which time Pharaoh will restore thee to thy place. This was a joyful interpretation to the butler, of whom Joseph desired nothing in return, but to remember him when he was in prosperity, and to intreat Pharaoh to restore him to liberty; because he had been fraudulently brought from his own country, and without any just cause cast into prison. No doubt the butler readily engaged to do this, though he was very tardy in performing his promise.

The baker, hearing what a happy interpretation the butler received of his dream, was the more ready to relate his dream also to Joseph. "I dreamt (said he) that  
" I had three baskets on my head; and in the uppermost  
" was all manner of baked meats for the king, and the  
" birds did eat them out of the basket that was on my

“ head.” Joseph as readily interprets this as the other, but in a very different manner. “ The three baskets (said he) “ are three days, at the end of which Pharaoh will “ hang thee on a gibbet, where the birds shall devour thy “ flesh.” This event, according to Joseph’s prediction, took place; for after three days the butler was restored, and the baker hanged.

Any one would conclude that the obligation under which the butler lay to Joseph should not long have slumbered in his breast; but that having, as cup-bearer, continual opportunities of remembering his condition, common gratitude might have excited some suitable attention to the case of Joseph. But the appointed season had not arrived. His patience was not sufficiently tried. Two years elapse before the favourable opportunity occurs. Then Pharaoh himself had the following dream. He was walking, as he conceived, on the banks of the Nile, where he saw seven fat kine which fed in the marshes; after which he saw seven others, frightful to behold, and exceedingly lean, which fed along the banks; and these last devoured the former. This dream awaked him; but falling asleep again, he dreamt a second dream; which was, That he saw seven beauteous and full ears of corn, shooting out from one stalk; and seven others very small and withered, devoured the first which were so beautiful. Pharaoh awaking in great consternation, called his people about him, and the dream making a strong impression on him, he summoned all his magicians and diviners, and told them his dreams; but there was not one that could expound them.

Now, at last, did God put it into the heart of the chief butler to remember Joseph: perceiving the king’s perplexity and disappointment, no one being able to interpret his dreams, he took the liberty of informing his Majesty, that when he and the baker had the misfortune to be under the king’s displeasure, each of them, in the same night, had a dream, which a young Hebrew, the captain’s servant, had interpreted, and that the event fully justified his interpretation.



Pharaoh, much pleased with this discovery, immediately sent for Joseph ; who was hastily brought out of the prison ; and having shaved and dressed himself, was introduced into the royal presence. Impatient to learn the meaning of his dreams, Pharaoh informed Joseph that he had dreamed, but that none of his subjects had been able to interpret his dreams, and added that he was informed of his skill in the art of interpretation.

Joseph, unwilling to assume any thing that did not belong to him, declined the character that Pharaoh was pleased to give him ; and said, “ It is from God, and not from me, that the king shall receive a happy exposition of his dreams.” Pharaoh then related to Joseph his dreams ; who told him that they both signified the same thing, and that it was God’s will thereby to give Pharaoh to understand what was to happen in the time to come : that the seven fat kine, and full ears, denoted the same thing, and signified seven years of plenty : that the seven lean kine, and seven withered ears, expressed seven years of famine, which were to follow : that there would be seven fruitful years, followed by seven years so barren, that the former plenty should be forgotten, and all the country would be consumed with famine ; and that the double dream was a token of the certainty of the event.

Joseph, having thus interpreted Pharaoh’s dream, proceeds to advise him how to improve the dreams to advantage, by making choice of some wise and able minister, who, under him, should be invested with full power over all Egypt, that he might appoint officers in all the towns, who should, during the seven years of plenty, lay up in public granaries the fifth part of the product of the earth ; and that all the said stores should be at the king’s disposal, and secured in the cities, to be preserved against the seven years of scarcity. Pharaoh approved of the counsel, as well as the interpretation, and was not long in making his choice ; for turning to his own subjects, he said, “ Can we find such an one as this is, a man in whom is the Spirit of God ?” And then turning to Joseph, said, “ Since God hath shewed thee all this, I know none so

“discreet and wise as thou art: Thou therefore shalt be the man. Thou shalt be over my house; and all my subjects shall be at thy command: only in the throne will I be greater than thee.” Then he bestowed the ensigns of royalty upon him, taking the ring off his own hand, and putting it on Joseph’s, with other marks of distinction; and causing him to ride in the second chariot, ordered his heralds to proclaim before him “Abrech,”\* in token of honour and subjection as Vicefoy of the country.

The king having invested him with full power, to engage him more firmly to his interest, changes his name from Joseph to Zaphnath-paaneah,† and matches him into a noble family, giving him for wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah, prince of On.‡ And now the seven plentiful years commencing, in which the earth brought forth in great abundance, Joseph began his circuit; and visiting every part of Egypt, he gathered up all the food which could be spared from present use, and laid it up in storehouses. This he continued to do during each of the seven fruitful years, till he had collected such an immense quantity, that it was impossible to keep an account of it. In this fruitful period, God blessed Joseph with two sons;

\* *Abrech.* This is a word of uncertain signification, but rendered by some *Saviour of the world*, by some *tender father*, and by others *bow the knee*; which last seems most proper in this place, because wherever he came in the chariot, they bowed the knee before him in token of honour and subjection to him, as he was chief governor of Egypt.

† *Zaphnath-paaneah.* That is a *revealer of secrets*, or one to whom secrets are revealed.

‡ *On.* This place was also called Heliopolis, or the City of the Sun, from the worship the inhabitants there paid to the sun. Some take Potipherah, Joseph’s father-in-law, to have been priest of On; but the Hebrew word signifying indifferently prince or priest, Tremellius and Junius render it prince, both here and after in chap. xlvii. 22, and 26. and give reasons to prove it should be read prince, not priest.

the eldest of which he called Manasseh,\* and the younger Ephraim.†

And now the seven years of plenty being expired, the seven years of scarcity commenced; and which was general, not only in Egypt, but in the neighbouring countries. But in Egypt, by Joseph's providence, they were furnished with provision, which he sold out, not only to the Egyptians, but to those also that came out of other countries.

In the second year of the famine, amongst those who came to Egypt to buy food, were Joseph's ten brethren, who by their father Jacob's order, came for that purpose from Canaan, where the famine raged more than in Egypt, because there were no stores laid up there. Being come into Egypt, they appeared before Joseph, who had the entire disposal of the corn; and as soon as they were introduced, they bowed‡ their heads to the ground before him. Joseph no sooner beheld them, than he knew them; and having a mind to terrify them, (which was but a trifling return for what they had made him suffer) and try what effect some little severity would produce, to bring them to a sense of their unnatural dealing with him, using an interpreter to avoid suspicion, he roughly asked them whence they came. They answered, from the land of Canaan, to buy provisions. He replied, they were spies, and came to make discovery of the nakedness of the country. They assured him they came upon no such design, but only to buy corn; that they were no enemies, nor had any thoughts of doing harm: that§

\* *Manasseh*. Which signifies *forgetting*: "For (said he) God hath made me forget all my toil, and my father's house."

† *Ephraim*. This signifies *fruitful*: "For (said he) God hath caused me to be fruitful in mine affliction."

‡ *Bowed*. Here was a completion of the first of Joseph's dreams, prognosticating his future greatness, which now began to be fulfilled.

§ *That*, &c. By this they suggested the improbability of their being spies, being all brethren, the sons of one man, since no man in his senses would send so many, and all of his own family, upon so dangerous and capital an enterprize.

they were all one man's sons, originally twelve in number, of whom the youngest was with their father, and the next to him was dead. But Joseph, repeating the charge, declares that they are certainly spies: to prove which, he would put it upon this issue; Ye say ye have  
 " a younger brother; agree upon one of you to go and  
 " fetch him, and ye shall be imprisoned in the mean time,  
 " that I may be satisfied whether what you say be true;  
 " otherwise as sure as Pharaoh\* lives, I shall look upon  
 " you as spies." Then putting them into safe custody for three days, during which they might consult what was best to be done, on the third day he commands them to be brought before him, and turning to them with an air of tenderness, tells them that he feared God, and therefore would act justly by them; and being unwilling that their families should suffer for their faults, or that they should suffer if they were innocent, " Therefore, (saith he) " Do  
 " this to save your lives: if ye be true men, let one of  
 " your brethren be bound in prison: and go ye, carry  
 " corn to prevent the famishing of your families; but be  
 " sure to bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall  
 " you be justified for honest men, and your lives be pre-  
 " served."

Not knowing how to help themselves, and not daring to expostulate with one so much their superior, and in whose power they were, they unanimously agreed. But at the same time their own distress put them in mind of the sad condition of their brother Joseph, who for ought they knew, might be dead, or under some miserable circumstance of life; reproaching one another, therefore, they cried, " Justly do we now suffer for our cruelty to our brother, to whom we refused mercy, though he begged it in  
 " the anguish of his soul: therefore God is just in sending

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\* *Pharaoh.* The Egyptians being idolaters, and using to swear by the life of their king, some think that Joseph living among them, had learned some of their corruptions; and this is rather believed because it is rendered *By the life of Pharaoh*: From which charge of swearing, Bishop Sanderson defends Joseph, Praelect. 5. Sect. 7. Some will have it a prayer for his life, &c. But in itself it looks more like a vehement obtestation than an oath.



“ this distress upon us.” “ Ah!” said Reuben, (who had dissuaded them from murdering Joseph, and advised them to put him into the pit, that he might find some way of preserving him,) “ did not I entreat you not to commit that crime against our brother? See now, his blood is required of us.”

Joseph, as hath been said, spoke to them by an interpreter, who must be supposed absent now, because he heard and understood their discourse, they speaking freely to one another before him, because they thought he did not understand them: but their words and distress so affected him, that he was forced to withdraw for a time to give vent to his tears: after which returning, and by his interpreter conversing with them, he took Simeon; and causing him to be bound in their presence, he set the rest at liberty; who having their sacks, by his order, filled with corn, and provision given them for their journey, they loaded their asses and departed.

When they came to their inn the first night, one of them opening his sack to give his ass provender, espied his money in the mouth of his sack, (for Joseph had ordered his steward to put every man's money into his sack again.) Being surprised at this, he tells the rest what had happened to him; who seeing the money, looked confusedly one on the other, and the sense of their guilt concerning Joseph haunting them, they considered this as an additional judgment of God upon them.

Being arrived in Canaan, they gave their father an account of their journey, relating the treatment they received from the Viceroy of Egypt; how he had suspected them to be spies, of which they had no way to clear themselves, but by leaving Simeon bound in prison as a pledge, till they should bring Benjamin, to prove that what they had told him of their family was true. This news was very ungrateful to Jacob, whose uneasiness was much increased, when, upon opening their sacks, they found every man's money in his sack; for they feared that when they should have cleared themselves of being spies, this might afford new matter of accusation. Upon which, the poor afflicted father breaks out into this complaint—

“ Me have ye bereaved of my children : Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me !” Reuben, hoping to persuade his father to consent to part with Benjamin, desired him to commit him to his care, engaging to bring him safe to him again ; “ Which if I do not (said he) slay two\* of my sons.”

This unnatural pledge carried but little weight in it with Jacob, for he was easily sensible how sad a recompence it would be to him, for the loss of his son, to kill two of his grandsons : so that this proposal, instead of allaying, did but aggravate his grief, and made him resolve not to trust Benjamin with them : “ For (said he) his brother Joseph (his only brother by the mother) is dead, and he is left alone ; and if any mischief befall him by the way, then will ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.”

In debates like these, they spent the time, till necessity put them in mind of returning to Egypt : for the famine increasing every day, and the provision they had brought being nearly exhausted, Jacob ordered his sons to repair to Egypt again, taking no notice of the obligation which the Viceroy had laid upon them, not to see his face again without their brother Benjamin. His sons knew it was in vain for them to go without him ; and how to persuade their father to part with him was hitherto an insuperable difficulty. Reuben had already tried his skill to no purpose, all his rhetoric and arguments proving ineffectual to move the patriarch to a compliance ; therefore Judah accosts him in a somewhat rougher manner, and in very short and downright terms urges the necessity of carrying Benjamin with them, “ It† is in vain, (says he) for us to go ; for the Viceroy solemnly protested that we

\* Two. Reuben at this time had four sons, as appears from Gen. xlv. 9. who went down afterwards with Jacob into Egypt.

† It is, &c. Our English, and some Latin versions, as likewise the Septuagint, render this very harshly, and make Judah very bluntly and irreverently tell his father *they will not go without Benjamin*, which is very indecent from a son to

“ should see his face no more, except we brought our brother with us.” This reduced Jacob to a great straight, and extorted from him a fresh complaint: “ Why, (said he) “ did ye deal so unkindly by me, as to tell him “ ye had another brother ?” They in excuse answered, “ He examined us so strictly of our family and condition “ that we could not avoid it; for he enquired particularly whether our father was yet alive; and whether “ we had another brother: besides, could we conceive “ that he would oblige us to bring our brother with us ?” Judah, observing his father beginning to waver in his resolution, reiterates the necessity of their return, and presses his father to consent, saying, “ Send the child with “ me, and we will go, that we may live, and not perish “ by famine. I will be surety for him, and at my hand “ shalt thou require him: if I bring him not safe again, “ then let me bear the blame for ever.”

At last, fondness submits to necessity, which drew the good old patriarch into a compliance, more than all their reasons and importunities. “ Since there is no remedy (said he) take some of the best fruits, and carry the “ man a present,\* some turpentine, some dates, some

a parent. Wherefore Junius softens the expression, *We cannot go without our brother*, unless we violate our promise, and hazard the displeasure of the Viceroy.

\* *Present*. The versions have ill expressed the present, which Jacob sent to Joseph, Gen. xliii. 11. “ Carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices,” &c. For the text evidently speaks of fruit, and such things as were taken from trees; and the balm did not grow in Judea, but on this side Jordan, near Engedi and Jericho, and not on the other side in the country of Gilead, where Jacob was then, as several historians relate. Besides, the balm was unknown in Judea before the days of Solomon, when the queen of Sheba brought it thither from Arabia Foelix, as Josephus affirms.

It is evident that the Hebrew word *Nicotb* signifies some particular drug, if we compare Gen. xxxvii. 25. with this text, Gen. xxxiv. 11. And since the *Storax* is very common in Syria, whence the Arabians transport it else where, it is probable that Aquila had reason to render this term by that of *Storax*, as Bochart has proved at large. He proves also that the word *Seri* cannot signify *Balm*, but only *Rosin* or *Turpentine*, as several have rendered it. But J. H. Ursin has proved that the Hebrew word *Lotb* signifies *Laudanum*.



“ storax, laudanum, &c. Take with you also double\*  
“ money, and the money that was brought back in your  
“ sacks, perhaps it was an over-sight, and take your brother  
“ Benjamin; and God Almighty incline the viceroy to be  
“ favourable to you, that he may send back your other  
“ brother and Benjamin.” Then taking leave of them,  
he said, “ If I be deprived of my children, I am deprived.”  
Thus quietly submitting all to the disposal of Providence,  
he dismissed them; who, having their brother Benjamin,  
double money, and a present to appease the angry gover-  
nor, went on cheerfully, hoping to appear with some credit  
and assurance before him.

Being come into Egypt, they appeared before Joseph,  
who seeing them, and Benjamin in their company, or-  
dered his steward to bring them into the house, and pro-  
vide for their entertainment, for they should dine with  
him. The steward obeyed, and conducted them in. This  
put them into a new fright, not knowing the honour  
that was intended them; and therefore, conferring to-  
gether, they concluded it was upon the account of the mo-  
ney they found in their sacks, and that they should be  
made slaves upon that pretence; to prevent which, as  
they hoped, they immediately applied themselves to the  
steward, telling him they had found that money in their

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The versions likewise confound the *Honey* with the *Dates*, because the Hebrew expresses both by the same name.

Some perhaps may ask how the things of which this present was compos-  
ed could be had in so great a famine? In answer to which it may be observed,  
that this was but the second year of the seven, and these things not being used  
for common food, there might be some small quantity of the old stock re-  
maining.

\* *Double money.* It is strange that some should take this double money to be  
ordered by Jacob to make amends for the money that they brought back in their  
sacks, whereas the very next words in the text clear that circumstance, mentioning  
the money found in their sacks. This double money then must be ordered by  
Jacob upon consideration that as the famine increased, the price of provisions  
would likewise be advanced; and therefore he ordered them to take the more mo-  
ney that they might not be disappointed.



sacks, which they had brought again, with more to buy what they wanted. The steward bade them fear nothing; for it was their God, and the God of their fathers, who had put that treasure into their sacks; for he had received the money and was satisfied; and finding them somewhat dejected, to comfort them, he brought forth their brother Simeon to them, and gave orders for water to wash their feet, and that provender should be given to their asses.

And now, being informed that they were to dine with the Viceroy, they prepared their present against he came; which he soon did, and they offered it to him with the most submissive prostration. Joseph saluted them in a friendly manner, and asked them how their father did, the old man, of whom they had told him, whether he were still alive? They answered him, "Thy servant our father is still alive and well:" And they bowed\* low. Joseph spake to his brethren in general, but his eyes were chiefly employed in surveying his brother Benjamin, who was more dear to him than any of them; therefore, very familiarly addressing himself to them concerning him, he asked, "Is this your younger brother, whom you mentioned?" And not waiting for an answer, he thus kindly salutes him, "God be gracious to thee my son." Joseph's affection shewed itself in his eyes, which obliged him to withdraw, that he might not yet discover himself; therefore retiring hastily to his chamber, he gave his passion vent in a flood of tears; which as soon as he had dried up, and washed his face, that it might not be observed he had wept, he returned very cheerfully into the room to them, giving orders for dinner to be brought in. Immediately the tables are spread. Joseph, by reason of his dignity sat by himself; for his brethren there was provision made by themselves; and for the Egyptians, who were to dine in his company, by themselves, because the Egyptians disdained to eat with such inferior people as shepherds, for such the Hebrews were. The eleven brethren,

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\* *Bowed.* In this action, no doubt Joseph could not but observe the accomplishment of his first dream, Gen. xxxvii. 7. wherein their sheaves made obeisance to his.

being placed in their seats according to the exact order of their birth, could not forbear admiring the strangeness\* of the thing. However, being kindly entertained, (for Joseph sent to each of them their mess from his table, but to Benjamin he sent a mess five times as much as any of theirs) they drank freely, and were merry with him.

Things succeeding thus happily beyond the expectation of Jacob's sons, they might reasonably conclude that all the danger was now over : but alas ! the sharpest trial is yet to come : their hard hearts, which could not be moved at the anguish of Joseph's soul, must be afflicted still more. And though Joseph, for the sake of his brother Benjamin, longed to discover himself, yet he delayed to do it for some time, till he had made them undergo another trial, which he put in execution thus : He ordered his steward to fill their sacks with corn, and to put money into every man's sack ; but in the sack of the youngest, to put the silver cup out of which he was accustomed to drink. This done, the next morning, early, they set homeward ; but they were not gone far, when Joseph, calling his steward, ordered him to pursue them, and charge them with stealing his cup. He soon overtook them ; and first reproaching them for their ingratitude, he then demands the cup. They, conscious of their innocence, seemed not affected with the charge ; but, as an argument of their probity and just dealing, reminded him of their bringing back the money which they found in their sacks. But to put the matter out of all doubt, in confidence of their innocence, they offered to stand a search under the severest penalties ; " With whomsoever of thy servants, (say they) it shall be found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's bond,

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\* *Strangeness.* The reason of the brethren's marvelling one at another not being expressed, leaves it uncertain whether they marvelled at the manner and order of the entertainment, or whether, not being placed by themselves, as some think, but by Joseph or his servants by his appointment, they marvelled how he came to understand the order of their ages to dispose them so properly in their due ranks.

“men.”\* The steward took them at their word, but with this mitigation, that he only, on whom the cup should be found, should be his servant, and the rest be blameless. Then every one unloaded his beast, and as they opened the sacks, he searched them, beginning at the eldest, and so proceeding to the youngest, found the cup in Benjamin’s sack. Here was a plain conviction, and yet no person was guilty: The poor youth, on whom it was taken, was struck with horror and amazement; it was to no purpose to offer a defence, for, on such a demonstration, none would believe him: besides, by mutual agreement between them and the steward, Benjamin’s life was forfeited, at least his liberty. Their grief and despair shewed itself in rending their clothes, and not knowing what to say, to palliate or excuse the fact, they silently load their asses, and in a mournful manner return to the city.

Joseph staid at home, impatiently expecting their arrival; who, on entering into his presence, immediately prostrated themselves at his feet, with the most humble and sorrowful reverence: but before they had opportunity to offer a word of defence or excuse, Joseph sternly accosts them saying, “What is this that ye have done? Could you imagine that ye could pass undiscovered?” In the midst of this consternation, Judah,

\* *Bondmen.* The Scripture sometimes gives the name of children, not only to those that are in childhood, but likewise to persons who are simple and innocent, and whose sincerity has not been corrupted by the malice of the world, as in Matt. xi. 25. and in 1 John ii. 12. 14. It likewise gives the name of son to those who are most in esteem, as in Gen. xliii. 39. And the name of children to slaves and servants, as St. Augustin hath observed on these words, “And we will be the children of my lord,” Gen. xlv. 9. which the Geneva version and ours have very well rendered, “And we also will be my lord’s bondmen.” And likewise where the original says, “Our father, thy child is well, Gen. xliii. 28. these two versions have very well rendered it, “Thy servant, our father is in good health.” For the quality of children could neither agree to Jacob or his sons upon that occasion. The Latins also used the word *puer* often in the same sense; and it is manifestly so taken in some other places of Scripture.



prostrating himself in a most submissive manner, cries out, "We have nothing to say for ourselves: God hath found out our sins, and we must remain slaves, with him in whose sack the cup was found." "Not so, (said Joseph) God forbid I should do such an injustice; he only who has stolen the cup shall be my slave; but as for the rest of you, return home to your father."

Judah, finding the Viceroy begin to melt, took the freedom to approach a little nearer, and in a most affecting speech repeated the whole case between them and their father, in relation to their bringing Benjamin into Egypt, to remove the suspicion of their being spies: describing the melancholy condition of their father, for the loss of his son Joseph; the extreme fondness he had for his son Benjamin; and the difficulty they had to prevail with him to trust the beloved youth with them, so that himself was forced to become security for the safe return of his brother. He then concluded by saying, "Now, therefore, when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us, (seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life) it shall come to pass that he will die; and thy servants shall bring the grey hairs of their father with sorrow to the grave. Now therefore, I beseech my lord, let me thy servant abide here, a slave, instead of the lad, and let him go up with his brethren; for how shall I see my father without him?" Joseph was so sensibly touched with this pathetic harangue, that he could no longer act the Viceroy and Judge. He had now gained his point; he perceived that his brethren were humbled for their crime: the cruelty of their temper was subdued, and they discovered filial tenderness for their aged parent. He could therefore no longer put violence on his own feelings; ordering therefore all his attendants to withdraw, he burst into a flood of tears, and cried aloud, "*I am Joseph!*" and instantly asks, "*Doth my father yet live?*" The name of Joseph, roused the sense of their guilt, to which the dread of the power he now possessed to revenge himself on them, did not a little contribute; so that in this terrible confusion they were not able to answer him.



Now struggling nature more plainly appeared in Joseph's eyes and voice; for observing the disorder of his brethren, in a compassionate accent he bids them come near him, and assures them he was their very brother Joseph, whom they sold; and though he had acted with the austerity of a viceroy, he still retained the tenderness of a brother; and to mitigate the remembrance of their cruelty towards him, he bids them no longer afflict themselves with the thoughts of it, for it was all God's\* doing, who permitted them, so to dispose of him for their preservation: "God (saith he) sent me hither before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. Ye ought therefore to be convinced that it was not you that sent me hither, but God, who, by the various dispensations of his providence, hath brought me to this dignity and power, that I may be an instrument of preserving the family of the faithful. For this end hath God made me as a father† to Pharaoh and his people, that by my counsel and care I might preserve them; therefore am I made lord of the King's house, and chief ruler over all the land of Egypt." Then he proposes the fetching of his father, with the whole family of Israel, from Canaan to Egypt; bidding them deliver this message unto him: "God hath made me lord of all Egypt, therefore defer not coming; for I will provide Goshen‡ for the place of thy habita-

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\* *God's doing.* Though God detests sin; yet he often renders the wickedness of man subservient to his glory: of which there are frequent instances in holy scripture besides this.

† *Father.* Our versions render this absolutely; but the Latin and the Septuagint more properly, *as a father*; that is, governor, counsellor, or moderator; for Joseph by his wisdom had all the kingdom of Egypt, and family of Pharaoh, committed to his care, and therefore might justly be called father of the kingdom under the king. Thus Haman is in Esth. xiii. 6. called a second father to Artaxerxes; which was reckoned the first title of honour and dignity in the courts of Tyre, Egypt, and Persia.

‡ *Goshen.* This was the most fruitful part of all Egypt, especially for pasture; and therefore the most commodious for them who were brought up

“tion, and there will I nourish thee and thy family, lest they come to want.” And that they might not doubt\* that he was indeed their brother Joseph, he told them, “Your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, (whom my father will especially regard,) that it is I myself that speak to you. And to comfort my father, tell him of my glory here, and all that you have seen; and make haste to conduct him hither.” Then taking Benjamin in his arms, they wept for joy; and as a seal of pardon for all offences, he tenderly embraced and kissed them severally, and wept over them. Joseph’s kind carriage and reconciliation having dispelled their fears and apprehensions of the severe resentment they might justly have expected from him, they took courage and conversed familiarly with him.

The report of the arrival of Joseph’s brethren, soon spread in Pharaoh’s court, which, for the great respect all had to Joseph, was very agreeable to the king and all the court; Pharaoh immediately orders Joseph to send his brethren to conduct his father, and all that belonged to him, into Egypt, where he should partake of the best during the famine, of which there were five years yet to come. Joseph gladly obeys, and accordingly provides carriages and food for their journey. But for a present to his father, he sent ten asses laden with the choicest dainties that Egypt could afford; and ten she-asses laden with corn and provisions for him by the way. And the more to cheer his brethren, and confirm his love to them, he gave to each of them changes of raiment; but to distinguish Benjamin from the rest, he gave him three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes or suits of clothes: and knowing their quarrelsome disposition, and fearing they should

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shepherds, and the shortest journey for him to make, as being nearest Canaan.

\* *Doubt.* Joseph having before spoken to them by an interpreter, he bids them observe that now he spoke to them in the Hebrew tongue, that they might the better be assured that it was he their brother who had hitherto conversed with them.

enter into some debate who was most in fault for the injury done to him, he lays a strict charge upon them not to fall out by the way.

Joseph having dismissed his brethren, they make the best of their way to Canaan, where they were joyfully received by their good old father, especially upon the return of his two sons, Simeon and Benjamin, whom he scarce expected to see again. But when they acquainted him with Joseph's being alive, and the grandeur of his station, his former grief revived; and, distrusting the extravagant account they gave, "his heart fainted, for he believed them not:" but when he saw the carriages, with the presents and provisions which Joseph had sent for him, his fainting spirits, like a lamp almost spent, but opportunely supplied with oil, again revived, and, in an ecstasy of joy he exclaimed, "*This is beyond my expectation: Joseph my son is yet alive! I will go and see him before I die.*" Accordingly he took his journey with all that he had; and stopping at Beersheba,\* he offered sacrifice to the God of his father Isaac. Here it was that God spake to Israel in the visions of the night, bidding him not fear to go down into Egypt,† for he would there make of him a great nation; that he would go with him, and surely bring‡ him thence again, and

\* *Beersheba.* Here it was where the Lord appeared to his father Isaac, and blessed him, and where his father built an altar, and worshipped the Lord, Gen. xxvi. 23, 24, 25. But by Jacob's offering sacrifice here it may reasonably be supposed that so pious a man as he was not only gave God thanks for the preservation of his son Joseph, and the safe return of his other sons, but implored the divine protection and blessing upon him and his, in the journey he had undertaken.

† *Egypt.* Though God had promised the land of Canaan to Israel's posterity, yet he persuades him to go into Egypt, (though a country where his ancestors had been ill treated,) for he would protect him.

‡ *Bring, &c.* That is, not that he should live to come out of Egypt, but that his body should be carried from thence to be buried in the sepulchre of his ancestors, and that his posterity should possess the promised land, from which he was departed. For as to Israel's dying in Egypt, it is plain that God at the time of this vision told him he should die there, Gen. xlv. for there Joseph is promised to close his eyes.

that his beloved Joseph should there close\* his eyes. Jacob encouraged by this divine promise, left Beersheba, and cheerfully pursues his journey towards Egypt; his sons carrying with them their little ones, and their wives, in the waggons which Pharaoh had sent to convey them. They took also with them their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, his sons, and his sons' sons, his daughters, † and his sons' daughters; making in all seventy ‡ persons.

Jacob being arrived on the borders of Egypt, dispatches his son Judah before him, to receive directions for going to Goshen; who soon returns to his father and conducts him thither; where, Joseph, with a train becoming his high station, meets him, and with infinite satisfaction congratulates his happy arrival in a place where he had power to make the rest of his life easy and comfortable. Here were the highest ecstasies of filial duty and parental affection expressed: tears of joy flowed on both sides; and while Joseph was contemplating the divine goodness which had once more restored him to the arms of his aged father, the pious patriarch, thinking his joy on earth complete, desired to live no longer: "Now, (says he) let me die, since I have seen thy face!"

\* *Close.* From hence Jacob might justly infer that he should die a natural death, and that his son Joseph should be with him to the last moment of his life; which must have been a great comfort to the fond old patriarch.

† *Daughters.* This will admit of a two-fold meaning; First, As it was a general way of speaking, such as Sarah used when she said, "Who should have said to Abraham that Sarah should have given suck to children?" Gen. xxi. 7. whereas she never gave suck but to one child, Isaac. Secondly, Though Jacob strictly had but one daughter, which was Dinah, yet here he may be understood to speak of his daughters-in-law.

‡ The names of Jacob's family, which he brought into Egypt, are particularly expressed in Gen. xli. 8, to 25. And both here and in Deut. x. 22. are computed to be in the whole number three-score and ten persons. But because there is an apparent difference between the account here, and that which is given by St. Stephen, Acts vii. 14. the one reckoning seventy, the other making it seventy-five, it may not be unpleasant to reconcile these different accounts. "This difficulty will be small, if we say, that the places are not parallel: for Moses makes a catalogue,



After these mutual endearments were somewhat over, Joseph proposes to his father and brethren, that he would go and acquaint the king with their arrival, which he was in gratitude obliged to do, since the king had sent for them; informing them at the same time, that he would acquaint him with their manner of life, which was in breeding and nourishing cattle, that if he should enquire of them what occupation they were bred to, they should answer accordingly; by which they would secure the land of Goshen for their use, where they might live and take care of their flocks and herds by themselves; for the Egyptians did so abominate shepherds, that they would never suffer them to live promiscuously amongst them.

Then Joseph, taking five of the most graceful persons of his brethren, went and acquainted Pharaoh that his father and family were arrived in Goshen; and presented the five he had brought with him to the king, who treated

in which, together with Jacob, his own offspring only, they that came of his loins, are comprehended, his son's wives being expressly excepted, v. 26. For which reason not only they who actually went into Egypt with him, but Joseph also, with his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, although they were in Egypt before, are included in the number seventy; because they having sprung from Jacob's loins, and taking their original from the land of Canaan, lived as strangers in the land of Egypt, and therefore were justly to be reckoned as if they had entered Egypt with Jacob. There is a substantial reason also, why Hezron and Hamul, the two grandsons of Judah by Pharez, are put into that number, though they were born afterwards in Egypt, that they might supply the place of Judah's two sons Er and Onan, who were dead before. But St. Stephen in his oration doth not set forth Jacob's genealogy; but declares who they were that Joseph called out of the land of Canaan into Egypt: for he called more than sprung from Jacob's loins. There, in the first place, are to be omitted Judah's two grandsons Hezron and Hamul, and in the next place, Joseph and his two sons: Judah's two grandsons he could not call, because they were not yet born: himself and his sons he could not call, because they were in Egypt already. Those five therefore, and then Jacob, whom St. Stephen mentions by himself, being set aside, there remain of Moses's number seventy, only sixty-four, viz. the eleven brethren, one sister, Dinah, and fifty-two children of the brethren; to which add the eleven wives of the eleven brethren, whom Joseph must needs call together with their husbands, and which belonged to the kindred, you have all his kindred in three-score and fifteen souls."

them respectfully for Joseph's sake; and demanding what they were bred to, they, according to their instructions answered that they were shepherds, and humbly begged leave to settle in Goshen. The king, turning to Joseph, graciously said, "The whole of the land is at thy disposal, place them in the best part of it, in Goshen, if they like that best; and if there be any among them of extraordinary skill in their way, let them have the care and management of my cattle."

Joseph's project thus happily succeeding, he introduces his father to the king, whom Jacob reverently salutes. The king, graciously condescending to talk with him, enquired his age. He replied that he was an hundred and thirty years old, though his ancestors had lived to a longer period. Then taking leave of Pharaoh, Joseph placed his father and his brethren in Rameses, a city afterwards of Goshen, which was the most fertile part of Egypt; where he nourished them, and provided for them according to their families, with that care and tenderness, as if they had been his children.

Good old Israel, and his family, being thus happily settled, Joseph returns to his charge. And now the famine increasing, people from all parts of Egypt and Canaan repair to Joseph, who furnished them with provisions, as long as their money held out; by which means he had collected all the money in the land, and brought it into the king's exchequer: and when that failed, they brought their cattle, for which he gave them bread in exchange. Thus they went on till the sixth\* year; and then the famine pressed them so extremely hard, that they were constrained to lay their condition before him, telling him that their money was all spent; and having already parted with their cattle, they had now nothing left to offer him but their persons and their lands,

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\* *Sixth*. This generally is translated the second year; but it must not be understood to be the second year of the seven years of famine, but the second from the time that their money failed, which was indeed the sixth of the seven, Gen. xlvii. v. 18.

which they intreated him, in pity, to accept, or else they must perish. Joseph took them at their word; and, in the king's name, and for his use, bought all the land of Egypt, except the land of the priests, who having an allowance from the king, were not compelled to part with their possessions: but the rest of the Egyptians sold their estates; and thus the land became entirely the king's. Then Joseph, repeating the condition of the bargain, tells them: "Behold I have this day bought both you and your land for Pharaoh: now here is seed for you, and ye shall sow\* the land. But upon these terms shall ye hold your land: ye shall every year give the fifth part of your increase to Pharaoh, and the other four parts shall be your own for seed, and for food for yourselves and families."

Thus Joseph settled it a standing law over all Egypt, that Pharaoh should have a fifth part of the yearly increase of the lands, except the lands of the priests. As for the common people, Joseph removed† them from the places of their constant abode to a greater distance, whereby they in process of time, knew not where to claim. Thus the Egyptians saved their lives at the expence of their estates and liberties, and of freemen became bondmen; in which condition they yet rejoiced, and gratefully acknowledged Joseph's care, calling him their Preserver: and to shew how willingly they submitted to these terms, they assured their prince, notwithstanding this, of their duty and loyalty, and unanimously said to Joseph, "Let us find favour in thy sight [that those condi-

\* *Sow.* This being the last year of the seven barren years, they might sow in hopes of plenty again.

† *Removed.* "This Joseph probably did, with intent that by so displacing and unsettling them from their ancient seats and demesns, and shifting them to and fro one upon another's land, but leaving none upon their own, he might confirm Pharaoh's title to the whole. Besides, this changing of habitations shewed that they had nothing of their own, but received all of the king's bounty."

“ tions may be ratified,] and we will be the king’s servants.”

The seven years of famine were succeeded by plentiful and seasonable years, the earth resuming its former fertility, and the whole land abounding in all the usual productions of nature. Twelve of these years of plenty Jacob lived to see ; at the end of which the lamp of nature became dim, and was nearly extinguished ; his decayed spirits warn him of approaching dissolution, and each drooping faculty became a prelude of death. He therefore sends for his son Joseph, and obliges him, by an oath, to bury him in the sepulchre of his fathers, which Joseph swears to do : upon this Jacob bowed himself to God, who, besides all his other mercies, had given him a fresh assurance, by Joseph’s promise and oath, that he should be carried out of Egypt into the promised land.

Joseph, leaving his father perfectly satisfied in the assurance he had given him, returns home ; but is soon recalled by the sad message of his sickness : upon which he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim, and went to visit him. The feeble patriarch summoned up all his spirits, and exerted them so far as to sit up in his bed to receive his favourite son. And when Joseph came near him, he recounted to him the promise which God had made to him of the land of Canaan : “ God Almighty (said he) “ appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, “ and blessed me, and said unto me, Behold I will make “ thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and will make of thee “ a multitude of people, and will give this land to thy “ seed for an everlasting possession,”\* Then taking Joseph’s two sons into a peculiar participation of this promise, he adopted them as his own immediate offspring : “ As Reuben and Simeon (says he) they shall be “ mine,” [so as to become each of them head of a distinct tribe in Israel, and to enjoy the privilege of primogeni-

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\* *Possession.* Perhaps Joseph might not know of this before, he having been separated from his father’s family when he was but a boy.



ture in right of their father Joseph, to whom the birth-right was transferred from Reuben, because of his incestuous transgression against his father:] “But as for “the issue thou shalt beget after them, they shall be “thine, and shall be called by the name of their brethren in their inheritance.” And proceeding, he gave Joseph a short account of the death and burial of Rachel his mother.

While Jacob was talking to Joseph concerning himself and his sons, he had not taken notice that Joseph’s sons were with him, but spoke of them as if they had been absent; but turning to Joseph, and seeing somebody with him, though he could not well discern who they were, for (his eyes being dim with age, and the children standing between their father’s knees, he could not distinguish them,) he asked, “Who are these?” Joseph immediately and piously answers, “These are my “sons, whom God hath given me in this place.” Then Jacob bids him bring them near him that he might bless them: and kissing and embracing them, said to Joseph in a transport of joy, “I was out of hopes of ever seeing “thy face again, and now God hath doubled that blessing; for he hath suffered me to live to see thee and thy “children!”

Joseph placing the children according to the order of their birth, had set Manasseh so as to receive the blessing of his father’s right-hand and Ephraim that of his left, guiding his hand at the same time: but Israel stretching out his right-hand laid it upon the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left upon Manasseh’s head; and he blessed Joseph in blessing his children, saying, “God, “before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, “the God which fed me all my life-time to this day, and “the Angel\* which redeemed me from all evils, bless the “lads: and let my name† be named on them, and the

\* *Angel.* That is, Christ, who is called the Angel or Messenger of the Covenant, Mal. iii. 1.

† *Name.* That is, let them be reckoned into my family, equally with the rest of my sons.

“ name of my fathers ; and let them grow into a multi-  
 “ tude in the midst of the earth.” Joseph was uneasy  
 that his father laid his right-hand (which carried with it  
 the preference) on the head of the youngest ; and sup-  
 posing it had been done through inadvertence, he held up  
 his father’s hand to remove it from Ephraim’s to Ma-  
 nasseh’s head, saying, “ Not so, my father ; for this is the  
 “ first-born, therefore put thy right-hand upon his head.”  
 But Israel, actuated by divine direction, refused, saying,  
 “ I know it, my son, I know it : he also shall become a  
 “ people and shall be great ; but truly his younger bro-  
 “ ther shall be greater than he, and his posterity shall be-  
 “ come a multitude.” Then, adding to his former bless-  
 “ ing, he said, “ In\* thee shall Israel bless, saying, God  
 “ make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh :” still setting  
 Ephraim before Manasseh. Finding himself then grow  
 weaker, he said to Joseph, “ I am now near my end ; but  
 “ though I leave you, God shall be with you, and bring  
 “ you again into the land of your fathers : and as for thee,  
 “ my Joseph, as a distinguishing mark of my love, I have  
 “ given thee one portion† above thy brethren, which I

\* *In thee, &c.* That is when any of the people of Israel shall bless their children, they shall say, “ Be thou multiplied as Ephraim and Manasseh are multiplied.” From hence it was the custom in Israel, that children should be brought to men eminent for piety, that they might bless them, and pray over them : thus they brought little children to Jesus. But when the blessing was given by imposition of hands, if it was to a son, he that blessed said “ God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh ;” if it was a daughter, “ God make thee as Sarah and Rebecca.”

† *Portion.* Since Jacob was so peaceable a man, that he never, as we read of, engaged in any martial enterprize, it may be enquired, how and when he took this portion of land, which he here gave to Joseph, from the Amorite with his sword and bow, or by force of arms ? Some refer it to that act of Simeon and Levi, in destroying the inhabitants of Shechem, Gen. xxxiv. But that cannot be : for, first, Jacob disavowed that act, and blamed them for it both then and now, Gen. xlvi. 5, 6, 7. Secondly, Those people of Shechem, whom they slew, were not Amorites, but Hivites, descended from Hivi, the sixth son of Canaan, Gen. x. 17. whereas the Amorites came from the fourth son of Canaan, v. 16. Others take

“took out of the hand of the Amorite, with my sword  
“and with my bow.”

The conversation hitherto was private between Jacob and Joseph only : but finding his end very near, he called for all his sons together, that while he had strength to deliver his mind, he might take his farewell of them, and not only distribute his blessings among them, but foretell what should befall them and their posterity in after-times. Then directing his speech to them severally, he begins thus to the eldest.

Reuben, thou art my first-born, the beginning of my strength, and by right of primogeniture wert entitled to many privileges and prerogatives, in superiority over thy brethren, and in power, from the double inheritance annexed in course to the birth-right : but these thou hast forfeited by defiling thy father's bed.\*

Simeon† in course is next ; but he is joined with Levi, for that wicked combination between them, in the massacre of Hamor and his people. Of these therefore Jacob says that they were brethren in iniquity : instruments of cruelty were in their habitations : O my soul come not thou into their secret ; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united : for in their anger they slew a man,‡ and in

these words of Jacob in a prophetic sense ; foretelling what he and his posterity should do : and through assurance of faith looking upon it as done, undertook to dispose of a double portion (appendant to the birth-right of Joseph, on whom he had conferred the birth-right) to be possessed by his posterity.

\* *Bed.* When Jacob heard that Reuben had defiled Bilhah, his concubinary wife, Gen. xxxv. 22. the text says that he took no farther notice of it then ; but now at his death he reproaches him severely with it, and gives it as the reason for which he deprived him of the privileges of primogeniture.

† *Simeon.* Reuben, having forfeited his right of primogeniture, it might be expected, that it should have devolved upon Simeon, who was next : but for his cruelty to Joseph, and the idolatry of his tribe in worshipping Baalpeor, Numb. xxv. the priesthood, which was the nobler dignity of the primogeniture, was transferred to Levi, the third son ; and the kingdom, the other part of the primogeniture, to Judah.

‡ *Man.* This is by the figure Synecdoche put for all the inhabitants of Shechem.

their cruel rage they digged\* down a wall : cursed be their anger, for it was fierce ; and their wrath, for it was cruel. Thus did Jacob set forth their offence in very aggravating colours, on which he pronounces a sentence proportionate, “ I will divide† them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.”

Having treated his three eldest sons with some severity, Jacob softens his style when he comes to Judah ; ‡ whose name signifying “ Praise,” it led him to a high encomium of him. “ Judah (said he) thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise for thy strength and courage. Thou shalt put thy enemies to flight ; thou shalt pursue them, lay hold of them, and destroy them ; thy father’s children shall bow§ down before thee.” And then,

\* *Digged*, &c. Meaning destroying and spoiling the city.

† *Divide*. This dividing may be applied to Simeon, whose tribe had not a distinct lot assigned them in Canaan, as the other tribes had ; but they were thrust within the lot of Judah, Josh. xix. 1. until in the time of Hezekiah King of Judah, a party of them smote the remainder of Amalek, and seating themselves in their possessions, 1 Chron. iv. 24. were thereby divided from the rest of their own tribe. As for the tribe of Levi, it was scattered through all the tribes ; having no peculiar lot or share of the land as the other tribes had.

‡ *Judah*. His mother Leah, Gen. xxix. 35. at his birth gave him that name in gratitude and thankfulness to God. But now his father calls him so for another reason, alluding to the praise his brethren should give him ; and that for many reasons ; viz. 1. The tribe of Judah was the first that entered the Red-Sea after Moses. 2. After the death of Joshua, the tribe of Judah was pitched upon to be commander in chief of all the other tribes, in their wars, Judg. i. 2. 3. From this tribe sprung the mighty and powerful king David, his son king Solomon, and several other kings till the Babylonish captivity. 4. This tribe waged war against the Ishmaelites, Idumeans, Moabites, Arabians, and other neighbouring nations. 5. From this tribe descended Zorobabel, who commanded the people in their return from Babylon. 6. And lastly, From this tribe sprung the Messiah.

§ *Bow down*. By this, though the birth-right was transferred from Reuben to Joseph, 1 Chron. v. 1. with respect to the double portion : yet that part of the prerogative of primogeniture, which concerned authority or government over the rest, is plainly conferred on Judah ; and so it is explained here, 1 Chron. v. 2.



wrapped up in the contemplation of Judah's strength and glory, he breaks forth into these elegant allegories; "Judah is like a lion's\* whelp. From the prey my son thou art gone up. He stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion, who shall dare to rouse him?" Then describing the duration of his government; "The sceptre (said he) shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver be wanting of his issue, till the Messiah come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."† Then pursuing his allegories, to express the prosperity and plenty of Judah's tribe, and the abundant fruitfulness of its soil, he added, "Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes." Signifying that wine should be with them as plentiful as water.

Jacob, keeping still in Leah's line, passes by Issachar, and takes Zebulun; whose name signifying "dwelling," he only says of him, that "he shall dwell at the haven of

For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler, though the birth-right was Joseph's, with respect to the inheritance.

\* *Lion's whelp.* Here are gradually described by the lion's age, the three degrees of the state of this tribe of Judah. The first, its infancy under Joshua. The second, its virile state under David. The third its confirmed state under Solomon.

† By the sceptre, an ancient and well-known ensign of royalty, is undoubtedly meant, the administration of temporal power. Hence the Septuagint render the passage, "A supreme governor shall not fail out of Judah, till the Messiah's advent." This prediction was actually accomplished. When our Saviour was about twelve years of age, the sceptre, which had been gradually departing for some time, totally departed from Judah; for Herod, (who died while our Lord was an infant) was succeeded by his son Archelaus, who, after reigning ten years, was deposed by Augustus Cæsar. Judah then became a Roman province; Quirinius, Prefect of Syria, was commissioned to take possession in the Emperor's name, and Coponius was sent to preside as Lieutenant Governor. The Jews openly confessed the total departure of the sceptre, when, at the trial of our Saviour, they cried out, "We have no King but Cæsar," and "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."

“ the sea ; and that he shall be an haven for ships, and  
 “ his border shall be unto Zidon.”\*

Coming next to Issachar, he compares him to a strong ass, couching down between two burdens ; seated in a pleasant and fertile country ; but being naturally slothful and pusillanimous, loved an inglorious ease, more than active liberty and bravery.

The good old patriarch having pronounced the future lot of Leah's offspring, proceeds to the children of the handmaidens, beginning with Dan, son of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid. “ Dan” signifying “ judging,” he said, “ Dan shall judge† his people, as one of the tribes of Israel ;” that is, though it was smaller, yet it should enjoy as much authority as another. That it should be like a snake‡ on the way, or an adder in the path, which bites the horses' heels, and makes them throw their riders. Here Jacob exclaimed, “ I have waited for thy salvation, O “ Lord!”§

\* *Zidon.* Accordingly this lot came forth. Josh. xix. 11.

† *Judge.* This was fulfilled in Samson ; yet was no more than Issachar did by Tola, Judg. x. 1. But it is supposed the reason why this was said of Dan, was to shew that the sons of the handmaids (of which Dan was the first named) though as born of bond-women, they were in that respect inferior to the rest of their brethren, should notwithstanding obtain some share in the government.

‡ *Snake.* This seems to intimate that the Danites should prevail more by policy and stratagem, than by open force : which Samson's dealing with the Philistines, Judg. xiv. and xv. ch. and the Danites taking Laish, ch. xviii. confirms.

§ *Lord.* Modern interpreters are very fanciful in the application of this text. There being no context to make it out, some have conjectured it to be a commendatory ejaculation on his death-bed. Others conceive that something more than ordinary impressed the patriarch's spirit at this time, and that he had some sense or foresight of the mischief the Danites afterwards brought upon themselves, when, having rifled Micha's house, and robbed him of his gods, they fell into open idolatry. Judg. xviii. We would rather consider it as a pious ejaculation. Being spent with the exertion of speaking, and perhaps ready to faint— with these words he pours out his soul to God. The salvation he had long waited

When he spake of Gad, alluding also to his name, he said, "A troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at last." By which he is thought to have referred to what was afterwards performed by Jephthah, who was of this tribe.\*

Of happy Asher he foretells, his bread shall be rich, and kings shall reckon it a dainty; which denoted the exuberant richness of the soil which his descendants should possess.

"Naphtali (says he) shall be like a tree having grafts, shooting out pleasant branches in its generation."†

And now he comes to his beloved Joseph, on whom he expatiates very largely, thinking he cannot say enough of him. "Joseph (says he) is like a fruitful bough of a tree planted near a spring, whose branches‡ run over the

for was Christ, to whom the gathering of the people should be, and to whom his departing spirit was about to be gathered. It was the consolation of a dying saint, that he had longed and waited for the Messiah, who was "all his salvation, and all his desire." Gen. xlix. 18.

\* *Tribe.* See Judg. xi.

† Thus it is translated by the learned Bochart, agreeably to the Septuagint, the Chaldee Paraphrase, and the Arabic Version which he consulted in Sweden, without following the pointing of the Masorets, by which the meaning of the text is frequently corrupted. The ordinary version is thus, "Naphtali is a hind let loose, he giveth goodly words." But we have no proof that the tribe of Naphtali was eminent for eloquence, and the Galileans, whose country belonged to it, were remarkable for a vulgar accent. But Naphtali might well be compared to a fruitful tree, for though he had but four sons, yet at the Exodus his tribe made up 53,400 men able to bear arms. Gen. xlii. 24. Numb. i. 42. Moses in blessing the same tribe says, Deut. xxxiii. 23. "O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord, possess thou the west and the south," (Vulgate—"The sea and the south,") i. e. the sea of Genesaret, which was south of their inheritance. Josephus describes the country which belonged to this tribe as the richest of all Judea.

‡ *Branches.* By this rhetorical amplification Jacob sets forth the strength of Joseph's family, and the large extent of his two-fold tribe, Ephraim and Manasseh, which at the first numbering of the tribes, yielded of men fit to go forth to war 72,700, (Numb. i.) And at the second numbering, 85,200, (Numb. xxvi.) far exceeding any other tribe.

“ wall.” And having thus set forth his future greatness in his posterity, he looks back and recollects his past troubles. “ The archers\* have sorely grieved him, and shot at him and hated him : but his bow abode in strength, and his hands and arms were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob : from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone† of Israel : to which thou wert advanced by the God of thy father, who shall help thee, and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with the blessings‡ of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb.” Then adding, “ The blessings of thy father have prevailed above

\* *Archers.* Among these archers his brethren may undoubtedly claim the first place : for they are expressly said to have hated him, Gen. xxxvii. 4. and to have increased their hatred to him, v. 5, 8. to have conspired his death, v. 18. and afterwards to have sold him, v. 28. Next to them his lewd mistress, and, by her means, his jealous master Potiphar, may be reckoned amongst those archers that sorely grieved him.

† *Stone.* So the last English translation has it, making the Shepherd and Stone synonymous. That of 1610 reads it “ Of whom was the Feeder appointed by the Stone of Israel ;” taking the stone to be Christ, and the shepherd or feeder appointed by him to be Joseph. But Tremellius and Junius make Joseph to be both the Shepherd and the Stone, viz. of refuge to Israel. There is an ellipsis or defect in the sentence ; which interpreters supply as they think best. However it be taken, undoubtedly Jacob had a regard to Joseph’s constantly resisting the assaults of his mistress, and patiently bearing the severity of his master, and likewise to his taking care of and feeding both Israel and the Egyptians, and others, as a shepherd provides for his flock.

Whatever reference this may have to Joseph as the preserver of the whole family, it cannot be doubted that Jesus Christ is predicted ; who is both the Shepherd of Israel, and the Stone of Israel. By the former name he is described both in the Old and New Testament. “ He shall feed his flock like a shepherd.” Is. xl. “ I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” John x. 11. He is also the Stone of Israel. In him was fulfilled that illustrious prophecy of Isaiah, (chap. xxviii. 16.) “ Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation—A STONE—a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.” Of Christ, in this character St. Paul speaks, 1 Cor. iii. 11. “ Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

‡ *Blessings.* These were terms comprehensive of all outward blessings.



“ the blessings of thy progenitors, unto the utmost bounds  
 “ of the everlasting\* hills :” and then to centre them all  
 in him, he says, “ They shall be on the head of Joseph,  
 “ and on the crown of the head of him that was separated  
 “ from his brethren.”

Jacob concludes with Benjamin his youngest son, of whom he said, “ Benjamin shall be ravenous as a wolf : in  
 “ the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he  
 “ shall divide the spoil.” In which words he as aptly as briefly foretells the fierce and cruel nature of that tribe, exemplified, amongst other instances, in that of the Levite’s† concubine.

The good old patriarch, having delivered himself thus to his sons, gives them his blessing, not according to his own natural affection or inclination, but according to the divine direction then given him ; and putting them in mind of his death, says, “ I am going to be gathered to my  
 “ people ; I charge you bury me with my fathers in the  
 “ cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite,” which that they might not mistake, he further describes thus ;  
 “ In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is be-  
 “ fore Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham  
 “ bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite ; for a pos-  
 “ session of a burying-place.” And to engage them the more to perform his will in this instance, he adds, “ There  
 “ Abraham and Sarah his wife were buried ; there Isaac and  
 “ Rebecca‡ his wife were buried ; and there I buried Leah.” And to assure them of their right to that burying-place, he tells them further, That the field and the cave was purchased not only of Ephron but of the children of

\* *Everlasting hills.* Which is a term of duration commonly used in scripture : But Deut. xxxiii. 15. seems to explain this text more directly, where Moses repeating this very blessing of Jacob on Joseph, does not seem so much to regard the comparison of hills in respect of duration, as in point of blessing, which God more largely dispensed in hills and mountains.

† *Levite’s, &c.* See Judg. xix. 20, 21.

‡ *Rebecca.* This is the first mention of Rebecca and Leah, with respect to their death and burial.

Heth. Having thus given his last charge concerning his funeral, he laid\* his feet on the bed and quietly expired.

The loss of a father so eminently pious and good, must undoubtedly have been very afflicting to so numerous a family; yet we find none of Jacob's sons that discovered so much filial affection and duty as Joseph. He could not see his aged father's face, though dead, without kissing and bathing it with his tears. And having thus given vent to his grief, he commanded his servants the physicians to embalm† him, which accordingly they did. And when the usual time of mourning was over, Joseph intreated some of Pharaoh's courtiers (for as he was a mourner, it was not proper for him to appear in the royal presence) to acquaint the king, that his father just before his death had obliged him by an oath, to bury him in the sepulchre of their family in the land of Canaan; and therefore to beg permission for him to go and bury his father, upon promise to come again. The king readily consents, and Joseph proceeds, attended not only with his own and his father's family, but with the chief officers of the household, and nobility, who, to honour Joseph, and to grace the funeral, would bear him company, partaking in all the solemnity performed to the memory of his deceased father.

After some travel they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, where Joseph made a solemn mourning for his

\* *Laid.* Whilst Jacob was prophesying and blessing his sons, he sat on the bed, his feet hanging down; but when he had done speaking to them and taken his leave of them, he gathered his feet into the bed and departed.

† *Embalm.* This being the first mention we have in the Scriptures of embalming the dead, may well countenance a supposition, that the Israelites here learning it of the Egyptians, and practising it afterwards on great and solemn occasions amongst themselves, as in 2 Chron. xvi. 14. and John xix. 40. it might from them come into use among Christians.

The manner of embalming dead bodies among the Egyptians was as follows.

A dissector, with a sharp Ethiopian stone, made an incision on the left side of the body, and then immediately hurried away from the spot, because the rela-

father, seven days together. The Canaanites who inhabited the land, seeing the Egyptians mix themselves in these obsequies, were amazed, and thinking they had the greatest concern in this funeral lamentation, could not forbear saying, "This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians:" From whence the name of that place was called "Abel-Misrain;" that is "the mourning of the Egyptians." This solemnity being ended, they proceeded; and being come to the field of Machpelah, which Abraham had bought for a burying-place, they interred Jacob in the cave there: and having thus performed the patriarch's will, they returned to Egypt.

During the life of their father, Joseph's brethren knew themselves secure; but now, their former guilt returned, and suggested to them the just revenge which Joseph might take of them for the miseries they had formerly occasioned him. Wherefore they consulted together how to deprecate their offence; which they soon agreed upon,

tions of the deceased were supposed to be hurt by this action, and took up stones to stone him as a cruel wretch.

The embalmers then drew out the brains of the deceased through his nostrils with iron hooks, and supplied their place in the skull with powerful astringent drugs. They also drew out the bowels, except the heart and kidneys, through the aperture made in the side. The intestines were then washed with palm wine, and preserved with suitable drugs. After this the whole body was laid in a kind of pickle made of salt, &c. for forty days; after which it was washed, and anointed with oil of cedar, myrrh, cinnamon, &c. The body was then carefully wrapped up in many folds of fine linen, dipped in myrrh, and a gum which the Egyptians used instead of glue. Thus the whole body was preserved intire, without putrefaction or losing its hair. The coffins were proportioned to the rank of the deceased, and often embellished with his figure, or likeness, and other ornaments. The prices of the embalmers were various; some were as high as an Egyptian talent, supposed to be about 300*l.* of our money. The bodies thus preserved were sometimes kept in the houses of their descendants as their most valuable articles of furniture, or deposited in the famous subterraneous repositories which abound in Egypt. Many of these Mummies (as they are called) have lately been found there, in the utmost perfection; and some are preserved in England in the Museums, in an entire state, with the features and hair particularly perfect, though embalmed probably two or three thousand years ago.

making their deceased father, whose memory they knew was very dear to pious Joseph, their advocate; and framing a message in Jacob's name, they sent it to their brother in these words: "Thy father commanded us before he died, saying, Thus shall ye say to Joseph: Forgive I pray thee now the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did evil unto thee; but pardon them, not only for my sake, but because they are the servants of the God of thy father." This message was artfully expressed, for, fearing that the supposed request of their dying father might not be powerful enough now he was dead, they make God himself also their intercessor. But there was no need of arguments like these to move the compassionate heart of Joseph; their present diffidence of his disposition towards them is now as afflicting as once their offence against him was. He wept at the delivery of the message; and sending for them, they falling down at his feet in the most abject manner, he tenderly dismisses their fears, and comforts them. "Revenge, (says he) belongs to God, and I forgive you. For though ye designed ill against me, yet God turned it to good, making me, through your malice, an instrument under him, to save much people alive, and you especially, as now is evident. Therefore fear no hurt from me, for I will protect and cherish you and your families." Thus the pious Joseph dismissed his brethren with the assurance that they should always find in him an affectionate brother and a constant friend.

Joseph lived fifty-four years after his father's decease, having the comfort of being the parent of a numerous offspring in his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh to the third generation. And now finding himself near his end, he sent for his brethren,\* and said thus to them: "My death is at hand, but though I leave you, yet God will

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\* *Brethren.* By brethren, we are not to understand the other eleven sons of Jacob, who, except Benjamin, being all older than himself, might probably be all or most of them dead; but it must be meant of the heads of their families: for in the scripture dialect all near kinsmen go under the general appellation of brethren, as Abraham called Lot, Gen. xiii. 8. and Ch. xxiv. 27.



“surely remember you, and bring you out of this land, into that which he swore he would give to the posterity of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I charge you therefore, when God shall thus visit you, and bring you out of this land, that you carry up my bones with you.” This he obliged them to by an oath. And Joseph, being an hundred and ten years old, died; and in order to perform their oath, they embalmed his body, and kept it in a coffin till the time of their deliverance should arrive.

St. Paul, commenting on this event (Heb. xi. 22.) says “By faith, Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones.” Thus, this excellent man, died, as well as lived, in faith. In firm dependence on the divine promises, he looked forward to the deliverance of the Church, not merely from Egypt, but from the bondage of Sin and Satan through the redemption of the Messiah. And it was in token of this expectation that he ordered his body to be preserved, and carried into the promised land. This his dying request was punctually observed, see Exodus xiii. 19. “And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him.” The Jews say that the bodies of all the patriarchs were taken with them at the same time; each tribe having preserved the body of its founder. From hence, probably, was derived the custom of men’s carrying the ashes of their ancestors into their own country, as by Hercules among the Greeks; and long before, by the Egyptians and Chaldeans, whom the Arabians imitated in following ages.

THE  
*HISTORY OF JOB.*

AN APPENDIX

TO THE  
*FIRST BOOK.*

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**M**OSES, intending to carry on the history of Jacob and his family to the period of their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage, without interruption, lays aside the story of Job, which according to the series of time should come in during the Israelites' servitude, and before their deliverance: for which reason it is inserted here, instead of placing it so far out of its due course of time as is done by the compilers of the Bible.

Various have been the conjectures concerning Job. Some suppose him to be descended from Nahor, the son of Terah, and brother of Abraham: others conceive him to be descended from Esau, and to be Jobab his great-grand-son. But the most probable opinion is, that he was a descendant from Abraham by Keturah, his second wife. With this, several circumstances concur: for Job is said to be the greatest and most considerable man for wealth of all the inhabitants of the East, into which country Abraham sent his sons by Keturah.\* And amongst the people of the East are reckoned the Midianites,† descended from Midian, one of Abraham's sons by Keturah.‡

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\* *Keturah.* Gen. xxv. 6.

† *Midianites.* Judg. vi. 3.

‡ *Keturah.* Gen. xxv. 2.

Taking it for granted that this story is real,\* we shall proceed to consider the time wherein he lived. That Job lived before the law, may be gathered from his offering burnt-offerings in the land where he resided, which God accepted and commanded; which offerings were forbidden† by the law in any other place than that which the Lord should choose in one of the tribes of Israel. And that he lived after Jacob, may be inferred from the character given him by God, “That‡ there was none like “him in the earth, for uprightness and the fear of God:” Which high encomium could not be allowed to any while Jacob lived, who was God’s peculiar servant, descended from the father of the faithful, Abraham, in a direct line from Isaac: nor can it well be supposed that so great a commendation could be given, after the death of Jacob, to any while Joseph lived, who in various excellencies made as bright a figure as any in his time.

After these conjectures, though the precise time of Job’s birth cannot with sufficient ground be ascertained: yet there is a general concurrence in opinion, that he

\* *Real.* From the uncertainty who Job was, some have taken the liberty to question, Whether he was at all? Whether in point of fact, it be strictly true, that there was such a man as Job, who underwent those trials and sufferings, which in this book are recorded of him? Or, whether it was only an instructive and parabolical poem, devised and composed by some of the devout ancients, on purpose to instil into the reader those excellent principles delivered in it. But besides other arguments that might be urged to prove the reality of the story, drawn from the names of persons, people, countries, and some particular passages therein mentioned, the credit given to it by God through his prophet Ezekiel, *cb.* xiv. 14. and his apostle St. James, *cb.* v. 11. in citing it, and referring to it, is enough to gain belief with all who have a due regard for those writings, that it is a real history.

Allowing, however, the *facts*, it may be safely admitted that it is a *poem* of the *dramatic* kind; including some allegory, amplification, and poetical ornament. The facts are clothed in a dramatic manner, and the speeches, probably, may have received some enlargement from the author, which is a usual licence in this kind of writing.

† *Forbidden.* Deut. xii. 13, 14.

‡ *That, &c.* See Job i. 8. and *cb.* ii. 3.

lived in the time of Israel's bondage in Egypt; some placing his birth\* in the same year in which Jacob went down into Egypt; and the beginning of his trials in the year that Joseph died, being the seventy-first of Job's life.

Nor are there less various conjectures about the time of writing this story; some suppose it written after the death of Moses; others think it written by Moses himself. The most probable opinion is, that it was really written by Moses while in the land of Midian. It matters not, however, who was the compiler: it is certain the whole story is an admirable commentary on the first book of the Pentateuch: and therefore no great number of historical observations can be expected from it.

St. Jerom is unnecessarily curious in defining the style of it: it is sufficient, that in Job we have the character of an excellent person, exhibited to us by God himself, adorned with all the virtues that can render him acceptable to God, and desirable to men; in which he is elegantly and briefly described as performing his duty, fearing God, and shunning evil.

How considerable Job was in the world, may appear from the estimate of his stock, which consisted of seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yokes of oxen, and five hundred she-asses.

As to domestic blessings, God had been very liberal to him, for he had seven sons and three daughters, who inherited their father's name, more than his virtues; being, it is thought, too much devoted to worldly pleasures: For when they were grown up, and removed from him, they took their turns in feasting from house to house,

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\* *Birth.* It might not probably be so liable to exception, if Job's birth were set a little lower, as about the time of Jacob's death: And then Joseph, who survived his father about fifty-four years, will have been dead about sixteen years, before that extraordinary character was given of Job, in the seventieth year of his age. At which time, for any thing that appears, he might well be without competitor or equal. And there being somewhat more than sixty years between Joseph's death, and the birth of Moses; the story of Job may fitly enough fall within that interval of time.



every one his day, and invited their sisters to feast with them. When they had finished their round, pious Job, considering the dangers that attend such festive meetings, and fearing lest his children, in their youthful mirth and amusements, might have committed some extravagancies, he kindly sent and exhorted them to purify themselves, preparatory to a solemn offering up of sacrifices to their God; the good man himself, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings for them, according to the number of them all. And this he did from time to time after their feasts. This pious care of Job was highly acceptable to his Maker, who expressed his high esteem and approbation, at a time when the Sons of God\* came to present themselves before the Lord; † at which time also Satan, the adversary, came among them, to seek an opportunity of doing mischief. Then the Almighty, to set forth Job as an exemplary pattern of righteousness, said to Satan; “Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth; a man exactly good, and one that feareth God and shunneth evil?” The malignant adversary, unwilling to admit that Job

\* *Sons of God.* That is good angels; as on the contrary Satan is called the Angel of Death: or it may refer to the assembly of pious men, the worshippers of Jehovah, who in early ages were called The Sons of God, Gen. vi. 2. God is present in such an assembly; and as good angels are probably present on such an occasion, (Luke xv. 7. 10. Eph. iii. 10.) so may evil spirits also.

† *Before the Lord.* Some will have this convention of the good angels to be real, but at the same time such as is agreeable to the nature of spirits; and that they met in a certain place, and Satan with them, before the angel, who in the room of God, presided over that assembly: but so, as Satan was seen of God and angels; but he, by reason of his fall, not able to see God or them. Others take it to be parabolically spoken, that the truth may be the better understood: for the decrees of God, the ministry of his angels, and the machinations of the wicked angels, are often in scripture expressed under the form of the judgments and counsels of kings; as we may see 1 Kings xxii. 19. Zech. iii. 1. But be it how it may, it is certain these things are not meant in a gross literal sense, but as God is pleased to accommodate himself to our understanding; for Satan can no other way be said to come into the presence of God, nor to talk with him, &c. nor the angels

served God from a religious principle, but merely for self-interest, replied: "Doth Job serve thee for nothing? Hast thou not enclosed him on all sides, and secured him, and all that he hath, from the reach of misfortune and danger? but withdraw thy protection, and suffer him to be afflicted with the loss of the mighty wealth thou hast heaped upon him, and he will curse thee to thy face." God knowing the integrity of Job, and that the exercise of it might redound to his honour, and become an useful example to others, was pleased to expose him to the trial. "Behold (says he) all that he hath is in thy power; but dare not to touch his person." The malicious fiend having obtained this permission, soon sets his wicked engines to work; and the more effectually to provoke the spirit of Job to blasphemy, attacks him all at once with a crowd of miseries; all most too much for human nature to bear.

Satan takes an opportunity to begin his assault upon Job on the day that his eldest son was in course to entertain his relations. He had, in readiness, stirred up the Sabeans\* to make an inroad upon Job for plunder; which they did with such fury, that but one servant escaped to bring the unhappy news to Job; "Thy oxen (said he) were ploughing, and the asses feeding by them, and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; and they have put all thy servants to the sword except myself." Job had not time to reflect with himself whether this might be the effect of common depredation, or a judgment upon him for the folly of his children; for this messenger is immediately succeeded by another, who in great consternation says, "The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burnt up the sheep and thy ser-

(properly speaking) to come to God, since they are always in his presence; nor can any day be assigned to God, who is without time, infinite, immense, &c.

\* *Sabeans*. They were a neighbouring people descended from Sheba, Grandson of Abraham by Keturah, Gen. xxv. 3.

“vants, and consumed them all, and I only am escaped to tell thee.” This account was very shocking; and the calamity coming from heaven, might make it appear more like an immediate judgment than the former; but before Job could animadvert upon it, a third messenger rushes in upon him and cries, “The Chaldeans, in three parties, fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, and all thy servants have they put to the sword, but myself.” Thus was Job, in a single day, bereft of all his extensive substance; and he, who in the morning was the most opulent man in all the country, became, before the night, one of the poorest in the world. The malicious enemy finding these attempts too remote to excite that passion in Job, which he expected upon this sudden concourse of afflictions, resolves, in order to crown the whole, to touch him in a more sensible part, and to come as near him as the bound prescribed by the Almighty would permit. This Prince of the Air, therefore, raising a very great storm, threw down to the ground the house in which the family of Job were assembled, and buried them all in the ruins. And that Job might not have any time to digest the grief of his former losses, before the last messenger had made an end of relating to him the loss of his camels, another comes in haste, and in a great consternation tells him, “That as his sons and daughters were eating, and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four\* corners

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\* *Four Corners.* This, among other passages of Scripture, hath excited the ridicule of infidel-wits, as incompatible with natural philosophy; but, independent of the agency of Satan, on this particular occasion (who is emphatically styled in Scripture, the Prince of the Winds, or Power of the Air) it is well known that the hurricanes of the West-Indies, as well as those tremendous storms denominated *tyfoons*, in the seas of *China*, are particularly distinguishable from all other winds, by their suddenly shifting round not only to the four points, but to every point of the compass, and blowing with a violence utterly inconceivable to Europeans. Effects are thus produced far more terrible and full as instantaneous as that recorded to have happened to the house of Job’s eldest son. It is this tremendous and sudden shifting of the wind, that dismasts or sinks the largest ships in an instant, and lays the strongest buildings level with the ground.



“ of the house, and it fell upon the young men,\* and “ they are dead, and I only escaped to tell thee.” This was a terrible stroke indeed, and touched Job in a tender part. The death of all his children, snatched away in a moment, affected him deeply ; but the circumstances and manner of their death were peculiarly afflicting, considering the unprepared state of mind in which death, too probably, found them.

These repeated calamities did not betray Job into any irregularity or indecency ; the only vent he at first gave to his grief was by rending his mantle, the common token of affliction and sorrow in those eastern countries and early ages of the world ; then, deliberately following the other usual customs of mourning, he shaved his head, and in humble submission of mind fell upon the ground and worshipped. His misery could not make him forget his duty, and therefore he humbled himself under the divine hand, without whose permission he well knew none of these troubles could have befallen him.

Satan’s great expectation was from this last trial ; he knew Job could with a serene mind sustain temporal losses, which time and industry might repair ; but this wound of nature, in the death of all his children, he thought would have transported him into some indecent and intemperate expression against God. But, to his great disappointment, Job stands the shock ; and in humble acknowledgment of his own meanness, cries, “ Naked came “ I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return to “ the earth, the common womb and mother of mankind.” And then, in a quiet resignation and thankfulness for what he had received at the hand of God, though now deprived of it, he gives up all for lost in this world, and says, “ The “ Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be “ the name of the Lord.” Thus the pious patriarch’s virtue shone in his sufferings, which, great as they were, could not make him deface the character his Maker had given

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\* *Men.* From the dignity of the masculine gender the word *men* here comprehends both sexes ; so that Job’s daughters as well as his sons were killed with the fall of the house.



him, by the least murmuring or repining. He knew it was but just, that he who gave, should have power to resume his grant whenever he pleased; and therefore, instead of cursing, as Satan had maliciously suggested he would, he blessed God for all his dispensations, and thus proved the devil to be a liar.

But that restless Fury resolves not to leave him thus: for when the Sons of God presented\* themselves as before, the Lord proposed Job again to Satan, who had intruded himself among them, as an instance of a perfect and upright man, that feared God and avoided evil. Still, says God, he maintains his integrity, though thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause: his piety appears in the greatness of his sufferings, and his faith and resignation are complete. To which the old Deceiver maliciously replied, "Thou hast hitherto permitted me only to try him at a distance, but let me touch his person, and he will yet blaspheme." The Almighty knowing that these exercises, though sharp to nature, would redound to his glory, and turn to Job's advantage; and resolving, in his divine providence, to arm Job with sufficient patience to endure them, and in the end to recompense all his sufferings with an extraordinary reward, he enlarges Satan's commission, but yet with a limitation; "Behold, (says he) he is in thy power, but touch not his life."

The busy Fiend, overjoyed at the enlargement of his power, doubts not in the least to make an easy conquest over Job; therefore he immediately falls upon him, while the sense of his late losses is fully retained, and severely afflicts him from head to foot, with the most painful boils and ulcers. Never was human nature more disguised than the body of Job in this loathsome condition: his skin studded with scabs and blotches, not arising from any peccant humour in his natural constitution, which medi-

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\* *Presented.* This, as hath been already said, is a form or manner of speech, not strictly proper to God and spirits, but metaphorically accommodated to the weakness of man's capacity.

cines might correct, but inflicted by malicious policy, which raised them to the highest extremity of pain, that might, if possible, oblige Job to despair and blaspheme. Nor were his pains short or intermitting, like fits and pangs, but lasting for a continued series of time; and that which increased his misery was the filthiness of his distemper, which rendered him odious to himself, and loathsome to others: for not only his relations\* and friends abandoned him, but his very menial servants withdrew from him, leaving him destitute of all human help. He, who but a few hours before, was the greatest man in his country, in whose presence the young men† were afraid to appear, and before whom the aged stood up; to whom princes paid the most awful reverence, and nobles in humble silence admired; divested of all grandeur, sits mourning on a bed of ashes; and instead of royal apparel was covered with offensive sores and ulcers. He, who but the other day was the delight of mankind, is now become the foulest of objects; and a very dunghill upon a dunghill. All keep at a frightful distance, and with horror behold him as a most loathsome monster. And to add, if it were possible, to the misery of Job, the wife of his bosom, from whom, more than from all the world beside, he might reasonably expect the most comfortable assistance, instead of pitying him in this deplorable condition, treats him with the utmost scorn and contempt, and reproaches him for his virtue. “Dost thou still, (said she) retain thine integrity to a God that afflicts thee? Curse him and die, that thou may’st be out of pain.”‡ Job

\* *Relations.* See Job xix. 13, 14, 15, 16.

† *Young men.* See Job xxix. 8. and *cb.* ix. 10.

‡ *Pain.* From the supposed ambiguity of the Hebrew word בָּרַךְ which is rendered both *to bless* and *to curse*, various interpretations have been given. Some suppose that this advice, “*Curse God and die,*” implies that Job lived after the law was given, which law made it death to curse God, (Levit. xxiv. 15, 16.) and that his wife, knowing this law, recommended this method of terminating his sufferings, by provoking the immediate anger of God. But as the law is never mentioned throughout the book of Job, it is far more probable that he lived before it was given at Sinai. It is not however likely that the wife of

firmly stood this shock of his wife's tongue; though it was so provoking as to let loose the reins of his temper, which he had hitherto restrained, and with some warmth obliged him to rebuke her, saying, "Thou talkest like a weak woman: shall we rejoice in prosperity, when it pleases God to bless us with it; and shall we not patiently bear adversity, when he is pleased to visit us?" Thus did the Almighty preserve and support Job under the loss of his estate and children; under the extremity of his pains, the desertion of his friends and relations, the neglect of his servants, and the provocation of his wife. All which torments crowding one upon another, could not betray him to entertain the least offending thought, or utter an indecent word.

The afflictions that befel Job, being so remarkable, soon spread about the neighbouring countries, and from thence to more distant regions; till at last they reached the ears of his old friends Eliphaz the Temanite,\* Bildad

Job should propose such an expedient. The radical idea of בָּרַךְ is *To couch, or lie down—or kneel*, and is therefore used for *blessing—to bow* as it were the knee to God, and ascribe one's happiness to him. Some Lexicons have absurdly given to this verb the sense of *cursing*, as in 1 Kings xxi. 10. 13. Job i. 5. 11. and ii. 5. 9. As to the two first, the LXX render בָּרַךְ in both by εὐλογεω, and the Vulgate by *benedico, to bless*. And though Jezebel was herself an abominable idolatress, yet as the law of Moses was still in force, she seems to have been wicked enough to have destroyed Naboth upon the false accusation of *blessing the* (Heathen) *Aleim* and *Moloch*, which subjected him to death, according to Deut. xiii. 6. xvii. 2—7.

Job's fear concerning his children was, lest his sons should have *blessed the false Aleim*, so Aquila εὐλογησαν and the Vulg. *benedixerint*. The meaning of Job's wife seems to have been *Dost thou yet retain thy integrity, thy regard for the true God, בָּרַךְ אֱלֹהִים וּמָת—blessing the Aleim and dying, or to death*. i. e. Do you still go on blessing him who curses you, with every misery, even to death? Well might Job say "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. *What! shall we receive good at the hand of the Aleim, and shall we not receive evil?*" See Parkhurst's *Heb. Lex. on the word בָּרַךְ*.

\* *Temanite*. So called from Teman, grandson to Esau by his son Eliphaz, Gen. xxxvi. 10, 11.

the Shuhite,\* and Zophar† the Naamathite, who no sooner heard of the sad condition of their friend Job, than they made an appointment to go together and pay him a visit to comfort him. These three persons being men of figure‡ and condition, it must take up some time to make the appointment, and then to travel together to see Job; so that he must continue a considerable time in this painful condition before his friends could arrive. When they came within sight of him, they found him so much altered, that they could not assure themselves who it was, so unlike himself was the poor disfigured Job. But when they came nearer, and saw the miserable condition he was in, they burst into tears; and rending their mantles, they sprinkled dust§ upon their heads towards heaven, to express their sorrow for him. And observing the extreme grief and pain under which he laboured, they sat down upon the ground by him, seven days and nights, and spake not a word to him; their own sorrow suppressing their speech, or their sense of his misery making them think it unreasonable to speak to him, till he began. At length Job brake silence, in cursing the day of his birth, wishing he had never been born, or that he had immediately died.

Job's three friends having already conceived an unfavourable opinion of him, from the unaccountable greatness of his affliction, which they concluded must be the hand of God in judgment upon him, either for some deep hypocrisy, or secret heinous sin, they begin to treat him with prodigious severity in their successive discourses.

\* *Shuhite*. Descended from Shuah, the youngest son of Abraham by Keturah, Gen. xxv. 2.

† *Zophar*. His descent is not easily traced, though some would derive him from Esau.

‡ *Figure*. The Septuagint call the first and last of these three friends of Job, kings; and the second tyrant; which is a term equivalent to that of king.

§ *Dust*, &c. By this rite or custom they signified the utmost confusion, expressed by their mixing air and earth together.



Eliphaz in three\* orations, Bildad in as many,† and Zophar in two,‡ from common topics argue, that such afflictions as his could proceed only from the immediate hand of God, and, that it is not consistent with the justice of the Divine Being to afflict without a cause, or punish without guilt. Then they charge Job with being a grievous sinner, and a great hypocrite, endeavouring if possible to extort a confession of guilt from him. But Job, immovable in his sincerity towards God, and innocence towards man, confidently maintains his integrity in responsory speeches, successively to each of theirs; defends his innocence; refutes their unkind suggestions; and smartly reprehends their injustice and want of charity; yet generally observing a submissive style and reverence, when he spake of God; of whose secret end in permitting this trial to come upon him being ignorant, he often importunately begged a discharge from this life, lest the continuance of his pains might drive him to impatience.

During this argument between Job and his three mistaken friends, there was present a young man, named Elihu,§ who having heard the discourse on both sides, was pleased with neither; for he thought Job insisted too much on his own justification; and that they condemned him before they had convicted him: he therefore undertakes the matter; and after a prefatory excuse|| for his interposing, who was a young man in comparison of them, and for the plainness of speech he intended to use, attacked Job in a long oration; \*\* and reprehending him

\* *Three.* See Job iv. and v. xv. and xvii.

† *Many.* See *ibid.* ch. viii. xviii. and xxix.

‡ *Two.* See *ibid.* ch. xi. and xx.

§ *Elibu.* He was descended from Buz, the son of Nahor, Abraham's brother, Gen. xxii. 21. and of the kindred of Ram, or Aram, Nahor's grandson, from whom the Aramites or Syrians came.

|| *Excuse.* See ch. xxxii.

\*\* *Oration.* Continued from ch. xxxiii. to xxxvii.

for insisting so much in his own vindication endeavoured to convince him, by arguments drawn from God's unlimited sovereignty and unsearchable wisdom, that it is not inconsistent with his justice to lay his afflicting hand upon the best and most righteous of men. And therefore that, it is the duty of all men to bear such exercises, when any befall them, without murmuring or complaining, and to acknowledge the justice of God therein. Job heard all this with great attention, but made no reply; probably, lest he might be drawn to utter some unguarded expression, which the inhuman treatment of his three friends might have extorted from him. Therefore, when they were all silent, the Lord himself took up the matter, and out of a whirlwind directed his speech to Job: wherein, with the highest amplifications, describing his omnipotence in the formation and disposition of the works of the creation,\* he so effectually convinced Job of his own weakness, and inability of himself to understand the ways and designs of God, that Job, in the most profound humility, exclaims, "Behold I am vile and contemptible  
 " in comparison of thee? What shall I answer thee? I  
 " will lay my hand upon my mouth: once have I spoken,  
 " but I will not answer: yea, twice, but I will proceed  
 " no further."† Then Job proceeded to a more ample confession of the supremacy, power, and wisdom of God, to this effect: "I know thou canst do every thing; and  
 " that no thought can be hid from thee. Well mightest  
 " thou ask, Who‡ he was that darkened counsel by words  
 " without knowledge? For I am sensible I have uttered  
 " what I understood not, things too wonderful for me,  
 " which I knew not. But henceforward I desire to learn  
 " of thee; therefore hear I beseech thee when I speak;  
 " and declare unto me what I ask. I have heard of thee  
 " before, by the hearing of the ear, (which gave me but a  
 " distant knowledge of thee;) but now I have obtained  
 " a more clear and certain knowledge of thee, for mine

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\* *Creation.* See from *cb.* xxxviii. to xli.

† *Further.* See *cb.* xlii.

‡ *Who.* See *cb.* xxxviii. 2.

“ eyes have seen\* thee : wherefore I reprove myself for  
 “ what I have done amiss, and repent in dust and ashes.”

God was so well pleased with this free and humble acknowledgment of Job, that he declared himself in favour of him, against his injurious friends, who by their unjust and uncharitable reflections, instead of being his comforters, had proved his tormenters. “ Wherefore (said God to Eliphaz the Temanite) “ my wrath is kindled  
 “ against thee and thy two friends ; for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore now take seven bullocks, and seven  
 “ rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering ; and my servant Job shall pray  
 “ for you ; for his prayers will I accept ; lest I deal with  
 “ you as ye deserve, for not speaking the truth, as my  
 “ servant Job hath.”

Job’s three friends alarmed with the menaces of an angry God, made haste to provide a sacrifice to appease the divine vengeance which they dreaded ; and when they offered, God was pleased to accept Job’s intercession† in their behalf.

After this, God was pleased to consider‡ Job, by putting a period to his sufferings, and to reward his faith and piety with a much greater estate than he ever possessed before ; doubling his former stock in every respect, except that of his children ; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yokes of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. He had also seven sons, who with three beautiful daughters, every day

\* *Seen.* See *cb.* xlii. 5. This is not meant of ocular demonstration, for God is invisible ; but the eyes meant are the eyes of the mind, or understanding, to which God had revealed himself.

† *Intercession.* Job may not improperly here be considered a type of that christian perfection which the Gospel requires in praying for enemies as well as friends.

‡ *Consider.* The text calls this change of Job’s condition, “ The turning of his captivity ;” which is a scripture phrase frequently used to signify an end or finishing of misery, and restoration of joy and felicity.

graced his table, and were esteemed the fairest women in all that country, to whom their father gave an inheritance among their brethren.

No sooner was the fame of Job's recovery, and the restoration of his prosperity known, than his kindred\* and acquaintance, from all parts, come to congratulate him upon this happy change: nor did they come empty handed; for every one brought him a present of money or some other valuable; † so many contributing, he soon became exceedingly wealthy; and to make his terrestrial happiness still greater, God blessed him with a prolongation of life far beyond the common extent of those times; for he lived an hundred and forty years after his restoration, which made his age above two hundred years; so that he saw the increase of his family to the fourth generation.

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THE Book of Job presents to our minds many excellent and instructive lessons. We may learn on how very precarious a tenure all our earthly blessings are held, and that we must therefore never "trust in uncertain riches."

The conduct of Divine Providence is exhibited in the most striking light, for it seems to be a principal design of the book to teach us that God, for wise ends, may permit the wicked greatly to prosper, while the righteous are oppressed, afflicted, and tormented; but that this affords no reason to say, "It is in vain to serve the Lord."

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\* *Kindred.* The text calls them brothers and sisters, which, according to Scripture style used to comprehend all kindred. Now, among all the rest of Job's friends there is no mention at last made of his wife upon this happy change; unless she be included in the number of his kindred; which is not unlikely.

† *Valuable.* This ancient custom still prevails all over Arabia and the East.—Presents, chiefly in money, are made by the natives to their Princes and great men, not only on their accession to power, but on their return from distant excursions; and more especially on their *recovery from sickness*.—The money so given frequently amounts to a very large sum.



The "*Patience of Job*" is particularly set before us by the apostle James, as truly exemplary—"Ye have heard of the patience of Job."

But there is one circumstance in the case of this excellent man, too generally overlooked—the prevalence of a self-righteous temper, and some expressions in his vindications of himself, not consistent with that humility which marked his general character. He seems to have claimed a degree of perfection to which no fallen man is entitled, as when he said, "I am clean without transgression.\* I am innocent, neither is there iniquity in me.† My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept and not declined, neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live."‡ He seems even to challenge the Almighty to a dispute: "Let him take his rod away from me; and let not his fear terrify me: then would I speak and not fear him. Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God. O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. Behold my desire is that the Almighty would answer me."§

Elihu justly reproves Job for thus justifying himself; declaring himself to be in God's place as his teacher: and to his reproof, Job quietly submits, making no reply, as he did to his three friends. Elihu enlarges on the holiness and majesty of God, and points out the proper use to be made of affliction. After describing the case of a man distressed like Job, he adds, "If there be a messenger with him, the—Angel-Mediator, who by way of eminence is styled, *One among a Thousand*, if he shall appear, and intercede in his behalf, and shew to the humbled man his uprightness—his own divine righteousness, (for man's own righteousness is ever defective)

\* *Cb.* xxxiii. 9.† *Cb.* xxiii. 11, 12.‡ *Cb.* xxvii. 6.§ *Cb.* ix. 34. xiii. 3. 22. xxiii. 3, 4. xxxi. 35.

“ then he is gracious to him, and saith, Deliver him from  
“ going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.—Save  
“ the man from perishing, for my justice is satisfied, and  
“ the sinner’s soul is redeemed by the atonement made  
“ by the Messiah in his behalf.” This discourse of Elihu,  
enforced by the word of God in the whirlwind, effectually  
humbled the self-righteous spirit of Job, who instead of  
justifying himself any longer, cries out, “ I abhor myself  
and repent in dust and ashes.” Thus the weakness of man  
is exposed, the necessity of his being clothed with humility,  
and depending only on the righteousness of God the Saviour  
for eternal life is fully declared: and thus, in the example  
of Job, the world is taught that the “ LORD is our righteousness,”  
and that he “ who glorieth, must glory only in Him.”

A  
COMPLETE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
*Holy Bible.*

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*BOOK THE SECOND*

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**L**ET us now return to Jacob's family, whom we left employed in embalming Joseph : after whose death, a new king succeeding in Egypt, who had no personal knowledge of Joseph, and the whole generation of people who in the great famine had tasted of his provident care being now dead, there remained no other monument of Joseph's service to the crown of Egypt, than the advancement of its revenues ; which ought to have been a consideration sufficient of itself to induce the new monarch to be favourable to the Israelites.

But he looked with a different eye upon them ; for observing how rapidly they increased, he began to entertain a jealousy of their growing numbers ; and observing that the land of Goshen where they dwelt was too limited for their accommodation, he feared lest at a future day they might be powerful enough to assume the government of Egypt. Therefore calling his council together, he acquaints them with his fears : they unanimously agree with their jealous prince in the expedient he proposed to check the growing danger suspected from the Israelites ; which was by employing them in making bricks, and building store-cities for Pharaoh. And to gratify their avarice as well as cruelty, they proposed not only to reap the profits of their service, but by continual

hard labour to impoverish their spirits, and enfeeble their bodies: therefore they set task-masters to oversee and keep them to hard labour, by which and other servile work they made their lives very uncomfortable. But God supported them under these severities; for, the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more they grew and multiplied; this increased their jealousy to a greater degree of cruelty; for the king, to suppress their growth, sent for two of the Hebrew midwives,\* Shiphrah and Puah, and gave them a strict charge, that when they should be called to do their office to the Hebrew women, if the child were a son, they should kill him; but if a daughter, that she should live.

The pious midwives, having a greater regard to the law of God and nature than to the cruel and unnatural command of the king, went on in their usual way, and preserved the male as well as female children; upon which Pharaoh sends for them again, and in great displeasure severely reprimands their neglect of his edict: in excuse for which they tell him, That the Hebrew women were not as the Egyptian women, for they had generally such a quick and easy labour, that they rarely needed their services. The piety of the midwives in preserving the male children was so acceptable to God, that he is said thereupon to deal well with them; and because they feared God he made them houses.† And by this means the people multiplied, and grew mighty. The king, whether satisfied or not with this answer of the midwives, not finding it safe to trust to them any longer, resolves upon

\* *Midwives.* The critics very needlessly, and with more subtilty than solidity controvert who those midwives were, and whether they were Hebrews or Egyptians? Without doubt they were Hebrews, and, by the king of Egypt's application to them, the most celebrated of their profession.

† *Houses.* That is, he made them to prosper, gave them children, and blessed their families. The word house being usually in Scripture taken for the offspring or family of any one; as the house of Aaron, Judah, David, &c. is put for the family of Aaron, Judah, David, &c. Some suppose they were married to the Israelites, and Hebrew families were built up by them.



a more effectual method to extirpate the Hebrews: and therefore he gave charge\* to all his people, that every son that should be born to them should be thrown into the river. This cruel edict for drowning all the male children must needs be very afflicting to the Hebrew parents, and put them upon many a thoughtful contrivance to preserve their infants; of which an instance soon occurred; for one Amram, of the house of Levi, having married a daughter of the same family, named Jochebed, had by her a daughter, whose name was Miriam, and four years afterwards a son, whom they called Aaron. About three years after Aaron's birth, Jochebed was delivered of another son, who being a child of most elegant beauty, something supernatural and divine appearing in his form, his mother was the more solicitous for his preservation. Wherefore she kept him concealed in her house three months; but not being able to secrete him any longer, and fearing he might fall into the hands of those that were appointed to drown the male children, she contrived a way to save him, by making a little ark or boat of bulrushes, which she covered with pitch and slime, to keep out the water, and putting the child into it, she laid it among the flags by the river side, and set his sister Miriam at a distance to observe what became of him. † But propitious providence soon interposes, and eases his anxious parent of her care; for Thermuthis, ‡

\* *Charge.* This inhuman edict is supposed by commentators to be so abhorred by the Egyptians, that they scarcely ever put it in execution; and that it was recalled immediately after the death of Amenophthis, then king of Egypt, who enacted it; which time Eusebius and others place in the fourth year of Moses.

† We are informed, Heb. xi. 23. that it was "by faith" that Moses was hidden by his parents—they had a firm dependence on the promises of God concerning the deliverance of their people from Egypt, which was strengthened by the dying testimony of Joseph, who commanded his bones to be carried with them when they should depart.

‡ *Thermuthis.* So Josephus calls her; and from him Philo, who adds, that she was the king's only daughter and heiress; and that having been some time married, but having no child, she pretended to be pregnant, and to be delivered

Pharaoh's only daughter, coming to the river to bathe herself, her maids looking for a retirement for that purpose, discovered the ark with the child in it, which Thermuthis commanding them to bring to her, she no sooner uncovered the child, than it made its mournful complaint to her in a flood of tears. The unexpectedness of the accident, and the extraordinary beauty of the child, moved the Egyptian princess with compassion, which she expressed in an accent of pity, saying, "This is some Hebrew child, which the parents have hid to preserve him from the king's severe edict."

By this time little Miriam, the child's sister, had crowded herself in among the attendants of the princess, and observing with what tenderness she looked upon the child, very officiously offered her service to procure an Hebrew nurse for him: which the princess accepting, the girl hastens to her mother, and brings her to the place, where she receives the child from the princess, who engaged to pay her for her care. This was no doubt a welcome bargain to the mother; who, taking the child home with her, was now at liberty to nurse it openly without apprehension, having a royal protection for his security.

Some time after, probably when he was weaned, his mother brought him to court, to shew him to the princess, and to satisfy her how he had improved under her care; who became so partial to him, that she adopted him for her son;\* and in remembrance that she had drawn

of Moses; whom she acknowledged as her own son. Agreeable to which is what the Apostle to the Heb. (xi. 24) says, That when Moses was grown up, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; from whence it is plain he was esteemed as such. And if any one should ask, why he did not, in right of his mother, succeed to the kingdom? it may reasonably be answered, that the fraud of his adopted mother, and his own adoption, being detected, he could pretend no right to the crown of Egypt.

\* *Son.* The Jews observe that whoever brings up a pupil in his house is in Scripture said to have begotten him. And thus it is said, Exod. ii. 10. That Moses was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, though she had only taken care of his education.

him out of the water, she called his name Moses;\* and to render him an accomplished person, she kept him at court, where he was instructed in all the learning† and discipline used among the Egyptians both civil and military, and in all things requisite and becoming the character and quality of a prince of the blood.

Moses being forty years old, left the court, and went to see his brethren; and when he reflected on the oppression they laboured under, it affected him with compassion and indignation to see the servants of the most High God subjected to a servitude exceeding that of brutes. This was increased by an opportunity that just then offered; which was, an Egyptian striking an Hebrew. This inflamed the zeal of Moses, who looking around to see whether any man was within sight, he chastises the Egyptian, making him expiate his barbarity to the injured Hebrew with his blood;‡ and afterwards buried him in the sand; supposing by his taking upon him thus to administer justice,

\* *Moses.* At his circumcision, says Clemens Alexandrinus, his parents called him Joachim, (that is, the resurrection of the Lord,) from a presaging hope, that the Lord, through him, would raise up his people Israël, deliver them from the Egyptian bondage they were then in, and bring them again to the promised land.

† *Learning.* From hence, no doubt, it was that St. Stephen, Acts vii. 22. said of Moses, that he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. Which, as likewise several other things, not being read in the Old Testament, are taken out of other records of the Jews. And both Josephus, lib. 2. and Clemens Alexandrinus, lib. 1. report of Moses, That he was General of the Egyptian forces, obtained a great victory over the Ethiopians, and did many other great things before he visited his brethren.

‡ *Blood.* The critics are at great variance about this action of Moses, some blaming, others justifying him. In the first place, we find Moses no where in holy Scripture blamed for this, but rather the contrary; for St. Stephen, Acts vii. 25. gives a fair handle to justify him as having power to do justice on the criminal Egyptian, he having before that time been endowed with the title and office of Deliverer of the people of God. This indeed the text before, cited very much favours. Others object, That it was very unreasonable, for Moses to kill the Egyptian for merely striking one of the Hebrews. In answer to this the Hebrews say, That the Jew, whom the Egyptian struck, was husband to one Salomith, a very



that his brethren would have understood\* that God, by his hand would have delivered them; but they understood him not. However, the next day he went out, and shewed himself among them again; and finding two men of the Hebrews quarrelling, he endeavoured to reconcile them, putting them in mind that they were brethren; and with some smartness reprehending the aggressor, he demanded for what reason he thus attacked the other? The man thrusting him away with disdain, replies, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me, as you did the Egyptian yesterday?" Moses was startled at this; for finding that his killing the Egyptian, notwithstanding his circumspection, was no longer a secret, he bethinks himself of his security; concluding that if the death of the Egyptian should reach Pharaoh's ear, he should surely die for it. Whereupon he left Egypt, and retired to Midian.

Though this affair proved the immediate occasion of his forsaking the Egyptian court, yet we are assured by St. Paul, Heb. xi. 24—26, that his determination to retire from all its promising advantages, was the effect of a divine principle implanted in his mind. It was "by faith," saith the inspired commentator on his history, that "Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." This determination naturally excites our wonder, for it is uncommon to see men forego ease, pleasure, and splendor.

beautiful woman, whom the Egyptian had debauched. And that therefore Moses slew the Egyptian, not for striking the Hebrew, but for the adultery, which he discovered from them whilst they were quarrelling. Others urge, that not all things are related here, which leave room for some conjecture; thus some say, perhaps the Egyptian had almost killed the Hebrew, and that Moses could no other way than by force keep him off: Or that the Egyptian attacked Moses, and so he was forced to kill him in his own defence.

\* *Understood.* See Acts vii. 25. where this is positively expressed by St. Stephen.



Moses had also the prospect of elevation to a throne ; but he acted on a principle, which rendered those considerations of no weight. Having been well instructed in the covenant of God with Abraham and his seed, and in the promise of the Saviour, who was to descend from Abraham, he was resolved to take his lot with his own people, whatever reproach or danger he might incur with them, being fully assured that they should be rescued from their present bondage ; and, probably, assured also, by some intimations from heaven, that he should become the instrument of their emancipation. On this arduous office however he was not yet to enter, as perhaps he might too rashly suppose, when he acted as a magistrate in the affair just mentioned ; but by a long retirement from the dissipation of a court, in the fields of Midian, he was to acquire a preparation for the important part he was to act as the deliverer of his nation.

It was in the solitude of Midian that he discovered the happy station where Majesty, guarded only with rural innocence, submitted to the humble office of a shepherd, and a crook, instead of a sceptre, graced the peaceful monarch's hand. Here Jethro, first in quality, both of prince and priest, enjoyed the blessings of a quiet reign ; whose daughters laid aside the distinction of their birth to feed their father's flocks, and took more delight in the innocent and useful employment of tending their sheep, than in the luxurious gaiety of a court.

In the plains of Midian there was a well, common to all the inhabitants of the place to water their cattle. Hither Moses directed his steps, as well to rest himself, as allay his thirst ; where, while he was refreshing himself, the seven daughters of the prince of Midian came to draw water to fill the troughs for their sheep ; but some churlish shepherds, determined to serve themselves first, came rudely and put the royal shepherdesses aside. Moses seeing this, steps in to their relief, and chastised the insolent peasants. The affrighted damsels returned to the wells, and Moses courteously assists them in drawing water for their flocks : after which they took their leave, and

hastened home to give their father an account of the generosity of the stranger, who had protected them against the insults of the rustics. Jethro\* hearing their story, and not seeing the person who had thus gallantly defended them, reprehends their ingratitude and incivility, asking what was become of the generous stranger? They told him they left him at the well: whereupon he bids them go and invite him home; where Moses is so charmed with their hospitable entertainment, that he expressed an inclination to take up his constant residence with them, and undertake the charge of their sheep. Jethro readily closed with the proposal, and to engage him the more to his interest, bestowed Zipporah, one of his daughters, upon him for a wife; by whom he had two sons, the eldest of whom he named Gershom, which signifies “a Stranger:” “For (said he) I have† been a stranger in a strange land:” and the younger he called Eliezer, importing, “God my help:” “For the God‡ of my father (said he) was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.”

While Moses continued in Jethro's family, the king of Egypt died: But his successor proved no more favourable to the poor oppressed Hebrews; who changed their oppressor, but not their condition; the miseries of which rather increased than abated. In vain they appeal to the merciless tyrant and his more cruel task-masters, who lord it over them with unbounded severity. But God, who saw the affliction of his people, and whose ears were open to receive their complaints, looked with an eye of compassion upon them; and the appointed time of their deliverance, which he in his secret providence had deter-

\* *Jethro.* He is called in Exodus ii. 18. Reuel. He is also called Reuel, Numb. x. 29. who was father to Hobab, called also, and more commonly, Jethro, Exod. iii. 1.

† *I have.* Exod. ii. 21.

‡ *God.* Exod. xviii. 4.

mined, being near, he began to prepare Moses for the great work of which he was to be made the honoured instrument.

While Moses kept his father's sheep, he one day led\* them as far into the desert as Mount Horeb, † where the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. Moses was startled at the sight; but that which added to his admiration and roused his curiosity, was the continuance of the bush unconsumed, notwithstanding it was wholly encompassed with flames. This extraordinary appearance induced Moses to examine it more attentively; he therefore said to himself, I will turn aside, and see if I can discover the reason of this unusual sight. But the Lord, to prevent his irreverent approach, and to strike him with the greater awe and sense of the Divine Presence, called to him out of the bush, and forbade his drawing nearer; and to make him still more sensible of the sacredness of the place, God commanded him not to profane it, but to put off his sandals, for the ground whereon he stood was holy. ‡ Moses being prepared for an awful attention, the Almighty thus discovers himself to him: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." § These words affected

\* *Led.* Here we may observe the manner of those times and countries, that whereas the shepherds here drive their flocks before them, the shepherds there went before their flocks, and the flocks followed them; which custom is alluded to in Psal. lxxx. 1. and John x. 4.

† *Horeb.* Which signifies *forsaken*, and is here, Exod. iii. 1. called the Mountain of God by way of anticipation, both from the following appearance of God upon it, at this time, and his descending upon it afterwards, to give the law to his people, *Ch.* xix. 20. where, though it is called *Sinai*, it is the same place with this, for St. Stephen reciting this present passage in Acts vii. 30. calls it mount *Sinai*.

‡ *Holy.* Meaning, that wherever God, who is holiness itself, appears, the place is holy, while he is present. It is worthy of remark, that the orientals uncover their feet to this day, in all places devoted to God.

§ The person speaking to Moses is called, Exod. iii. 2. "The Angel of the Lord;" and yet this Angel is no created being, for he says, "I am the God

Moses with such reverence of the Divine Majesty, and fear of the effects of his unwitting presumption, that he fell on the ground and covered his face, not daring to look up on the terrible glory. But the Lord proceeding, said, "I have seen the affliction of my people, I have heard their complaint, and am come\* down to deliver them out of the hand of their oppressors, and to conduct them to the promised land, a land that floweth with milk† and honey; to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites, the Amorites and the Perrizzites, the Hivites and the Jebuzites. And thee have I pitched upon to be my instrument in this great work; therefore be of good courage,‡ for I will send thee to Pharaoh to demand liberty of him for my people, the children of Israel." Moses, considering how things stood with him in Egypt, and upon what account he left that court; and probably not knowing that the old king of Egypt, who had threatened his life, was dead, began to excuse himself, urging his own meanness and insufficiency to take upon himself the character of an ambassador. But God removed this difficulty, saying, "I will certainly be with thee: and

of thy father," and, "I am that I am," he therefore could be no other than the supreme Jehovah; he who afterwards appeared on Mount Sinai, who gave the Law on that mount as the King of Israel, and who conducted them through the wilderness. And as no man hath seen God, the Father, at any time, it must have been the second person in the adorable Trinity, and who, though in the form of God, was made in the likeness of man.

It is remarkable that our Saviour infers the resurrection of the dead from the passage above mentioned. "I am the God of Abraham," &c. Matt. xxii. 31. and shews that though they were long deceased, yet they existed still with him; and that their bodies shall hereafter share in celestial glory.

\* *Come.* This is speaking according to the manner of men; God vouchsafes to express himself in the language and according to the capacity of man, that he may understand him.

† *Milk.* This is an hyperbolical expression of fruitfulness and plenty of good things.

‡ *Courage.* This is most properly rendered by the Septuagint, the word which we render *come now*, being an adverb of exhorting.



“ let this extraordinary sight, which thou hast now seen,  
 “ be a token that I have sent thee : and when thou hast  
 “ brought the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve me on  
 “ this mountain.” But Moses, to evade this office, increases  
 the difficulty by urging, “ When I come to the children of  
 “ Israel, and tell them that the God of their fathers hath  
 “ sent me to them, and they shall ask me his name ; what  
 “ shall I say to them?” God replied, “ I AM THAT I AM.\*  
 “ And thou shalt further say to them ; I AM, (that is, The  
 “ LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the  
 “ God of Isaac, the God of Jacob) hath sent me to you ;  
 “ that is the Name I have had from all eternity, and by  
 “ that name will I be known for ever. Go, gather the  
 “ Elders† of Israel, and say to them, The Lord God of  
 “ your fathers hath appeared to me, and said, I have seen  
 “ all the calamities that have befallen you in Egypt, and  
 “ am resolved to deliver you, and lead you into the  
 “ land of Canaan. The Israelites shall believe you, and  
 “ you shall go to the king of Egypt, and say to him, the  
 “ God of the Hebrews hath commanded us to go three  
 “ days’ journey into the desert, there to offer sacrifice to  
 “ the Lord our God. This request, though so very rea-  
 “ sonable, I know he will not grant ; but will refuse to  
 “ let you go unless compelled by a powerful hand : but  
 “ I will exert myself in many miraculous operations upon  
 “ him and his subjects, and at last he shall permit you to

\* *I AM.* This denotes the eternity of God, whose essence knows no begin-  
 ning nor end. And it is common with the Hebrews to express the future in the  
 present tense : and for this reason some turn it, I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE ;  
 and contend that it ought to be so rendered, not only from the letter of the Hebrew  
 text, but from the genuine sense of the words : from which others likewise infer  
 that it ought to be so rendered, I WILL BE *for ever* ; and I WILL BE *with you and*  
*redeem you from the Egyptians* : and others, I WILL BE *with you in your present tribu-*  
*lations and future calamities.* This name is likewise expressed in Rev. i. 4. by  
 which is signified JEHOVAH, which is the proper name of God.

† *Elders.* By this some understand the Doctors and Governors ; but it is most  
 probable the elders were heads or chiefs of tribes and families. By which it is  
 plain there was a private policy and economy continued among the Israelites,  
 though in this servile condition.

“ depart ; but you shall not go away empty, for you shall  
“ be laden with the spoils of the Egyptians.”

This solemn assurance, delivered by the mouth of God, one would conceive might have been sufficient to have encouraged Moses willingly to undertake the embassy ; but either from the difficulty or boldness of the enterprize, or from diffidence of his own abilities, he declines it, and questions whether the Israelitēs will receive his credentials. This objection God immediately overrules by a miracle ; for commanding him to throw his rod on the ground, it was instantly turned into a serpent : Moses, affrighted at this sudden transformation of his rod, fled from it. But God, to encourage him, bade him take it by the tail ; which he had no sooner done, than it resumed its former shape. And at the same time to convince him that he should not want credit with the Israelites, God gave him commission to perform the same miracle before them : and to remove all further scruple he condescends to give him another sign, bidding him put his hand into his bosom ; which he had no sooner done, than it was struck with a white\* leprosy. And when, by God’s command, he had put it into his bosom again, and plucked it out, his flesh had resumed its former colour and substance. And yet to arm him sufficiently, and beyond all question, he was pleased to add a third miracle : “ If they will not believe these two former, (said he) thou shalt take of the  
“ water of the river and pour it upon dry land, and the  
“ water shall become blood.”

Still Moses excused himself ; and his last plea was, that he was totally destitute of eloquence, the great qualification of an ambassador ; and that, since God had condescended to talk to him, he was more slow of speech than before. This objection the Lord was pleased to remove by putting him in mind of his omnipotence : “ Who

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\* *White Leprosy.* The evidence of this miracle was so much the more convincing ; because the *White Leprosy*, which was held incurable, was both inflicted and healed in an instant, without any outward means, or physical application.

“made the mouth of man? (said he) And who made the dumb and the deaf, and the blind, and him that sees? Was it not I? Now therefore go and I will furnish thee with words, and make thee eloquent.” Hitherto Moses had some shadow of pretence for his unwillingness to go; but now, when all his objections are answered, and his scruples removed, he very bluntly begs to be excused from this enterprize, saying, “O my Lord, instead of me, send I pray thee, by him\* whom thou wilt send.” So long as Moses had any thing to plead in excuse† for his not going, God heard him patiently, and graciously condescended to remove his doubts; but when his modesty in declining the office and honour God proposed to him was turned into an obstinate refusal, the Lord was angry with him; but in his anger remembering mercy, he resumes Moses’s last objection, (which he had already answered in general,) and shews him more particularly how to supply that defect: “Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? He is eloquent, and I will appoint him to meet thee. Tell him what I have said; and be assured that I will assist you both, and direct you what to say: he shall be the orator, and thou shalt be to him

\* *Him.* Exod. iv. 13. The text says, “Send by the hand of him that thou wilt send;” where the word *hand* is put for the office or ministry. But by Moses desiring God to send another instead of him, he means a man fitter to execute that commission than himself. Who the person meant was, is much controverted. The Hebrews say Aaron, who at that time was a prophet in Israel: some of them say the Messias; and of this opinion are all the Latin commentators; because the Jews in all their more weighty cases and affairs had regard to the promised Messias.

† *Excuse.* It is the opinion of several commentators on this place, and it is very probable that Moses had another reason besides his insufficiency, which made him unwilling to go on this errand into Egypt, and which he was not willing to discover. Just before God appeared to Moses in the bush, and had this discourse with him, we read, Exod. ii. 25. That the king of Egypt died; that king in whose reign Moses had slain the Egyptian, and who sought to apprehend and put him to death for it. The report of that king’s death might not probably yet have reached Moses. However, he might reasonably think that some of the kindred of the slain man were yet living, who might prosecute him for the murder:



“ instead\* of God. † And to strengthen thy commission,  
 “ and give thee credit among my people, take this rod in  
 “ thy hand, for I will enable thee to do many miracles  
 “ with it.” ‡

Moses, having nothing more to urge against this enterprize, at length yields, and took the rod of God in his hand. Then taking his wife and sons, he left mount Horeb, and went to Jethro his father-in-law, with whom, it seems, he left them till he had conducted the children of Israel out of Egypt; when Jethro brought|| them to him again in the wilderness.

Moses being thus convinced that God had appointed him the agent in transacting this grand affair, while he was preparing himself for this journey, to make him more

and for that reason he might be unwilling to return to Egypt, (from whence on that occasion he fled for his life) lest he should be taken and executed for it. However, it is observable that God would not free him from that fear till he had absolutely resigned, and wholly submitted to his will in going.

\* *Instead.* That is, he shall consult thee instead of me, that from thee he may know my will, and thou shalt impart to him what thou receivest of me. Consonant to this is what our Saviour said to his Apostles, “ He that heareth you, heareth me,” &c.

† *God.* By these words, *Thou shalt be to him* instead of, or as *God*, commentators shew the power with which God now invested Moses, in delivering him this commission, making him not only chief over Aaron, but the rest of the Israelites: for this name of God is no where given to men, but to signify the power of life and death over them.

‡ Forty years before this, Moses seemed forward, if not rash, to undertake the great enterprize, as appeared by his avenging the quarrel of his countryman; but in the solitude of Midian, he had attained more knowledge of God and of himself, and now he is too backward and diffident. Thus is human nature prone to extremes, and every grace is mingled with imperfection. Zeal too often is alloyed with pride, and meekness betrays us into cowardice.

§ *Rod of God.* So it is now called, since God had so signally honoured it, and, as it were, consecrated it to a holy use. Exod. iv. 20.

|| *Brought.* See Exod. xviii. 2, &c.



cheerfully proceed in it, and to dispel his fears of being called to account for his former actions in Egypt, God bids him return thither, assuring him that those who had a design against his life were dead. Then repeating his former order, he says, "When thou comest into Egypt, be sure to perform all the miracles I have enabled thee to do: and to illustrate my power, I will so harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall refuse to let the children of Israel go till I have slain his son, even his first-born."

By the way, God takes occasion to put Moses in mind of the danger of disobedience, to preserve him from relapsing into it. It seems Moses, either through neglect, or indulgence to his wife, (who was not an Israelite,) had not yet circumcised his son Eliezer; by which he so highly provoked the Lord, that in the way he threatened to kill\* him for his neglect.† His wife Zipporah, understanding the cause of the divine displeasure, took a sharp flint, and immediately circumcised the child, and then exclaimed, "Thou art a husband of blood‡ to me." The Lord then pardoned Moses, and dismissed him to pursue

\* *Kill him.* The text in Exod: iv. 24, being not particular in the manner, interpreters differ about it; but that which seems most probable from the context is, that Moses's punishment must be sickness, or some corporal visitation upon him; otherwise, if he had been in health, he, and not Zipporah his wife, would have circumcised the child.

† Into this neglect he was probably betrayed by a sinful compliance with the false tenderness of his wife, who, it may be feared, had no sense of true religion; so dangerous is it to be "unequally yoked with unbelievers:" but it affords us an awful admonition to obey God, however our dearest friends may oppose. God's ordinances, are not to be slighted from any worldly considerations whatever.

‡ *Blood.* Many and various are the opinions of the learned on this text. Some will have it spoken to the child that was circumcised; but neither the words nor the circumstances of the action can allow that. Undoubtedly the word *blood* here refers to the *circumcision*, which was the cause of its effusion. Nor do they seem to conjecture amiss, who thus interpret this text: "With the blood of my child I preserve and save thee; for the neglect of the child's being circumcised being thy fault, I have saved thy life by the blood of the circumcision, which otherwise

his journey; which he commenced, and soon arrived at the house of his father-in-law, Jethro, whom, it should seem, he had not informed concerning the particular cause of his leaving Egypt, nor does he now relate any thing of the vision he had seen, or of the commission he had received from God; but, as he had entered himself, by contract, into Jethro's service, and become so nearly related to his family, he thought it but decent and reasonable to ask his consent to return to Egypt to visit his brethren and see whether they were living. Jethro readily gave consent in the usual form, "Go in peace."

Moses being now on his way to Egypt, the Lord commanded\* Aaron his brother to go into the wilderness to meet him. Aaron obeyed, and went as far as mount Horeb, where he met his brother and embraced him; to whom Moses related all that God had commanded him, and the wonders which he was to perform,

The two brothers, thus joined in commission, (though Moses was the superior) repair to Egypt; and summoning the elders of the people together, Aaron delivers the message which the Lord had sent by Moses; which Moses straightway confirmed by performing the miracles which God had commanded in the sight of the people, who thereupon believed, and received them joyfully. And now, all being convinced that the Lord had taken compassion on the wretched condition of the children of Israel, that he had visited them in their affliction, and had taken measures for their deliverance, they fell down and worshipped him.

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God might have taken away." The best commentators concur in this, and render it with this little variation, "Thou art the cause of the shedding the blood of the child, for which reason I call thee a husband of blood."

\* *Commanded.* Hence it is plain, that Aaron, as a prophet, received a revelation from God: which is likewise confirmed, 1 Sam. ii. 27. "Did not I plainly appear to the house of thy father when they were in Egypt?" For Eli was descended from Aaron.

Shortly after they repair to the Egyptian court; and being admitted into the royal presence, they delivered their message to the king in these words, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may celebrate a feast to me in the desert." The haughty Pharaoh, affronted at this freedom of speech from an enslaved people, profanely demands, "Who is the Lord, whom ye call the God of Israel? Am not I sole monarch here? I own not Israel's God; nor will I let you go." Moses and Aaron, to inform him whom they meant by the Lord, replied, "The God of the Hebrews, whom we adore, hath commanded us to offer sacrifice to him; therefore we request leave to go three days' journey into the desert, that we may pay due adoration to our God, lest he punish us for our disobedience, and you much more for hindering us." The king, incensed at this unusual liberty and looking upon them as incendiaries, sharply reprimands them, saying, "Why do ye hinder the people from their work? because they are numerous ye would excite them to rebel: be gone all to your labour, or I will make you sensible of my royal displeasure."

The king having thus rudely dismissed Moses and Aaron, gave charge to the task-masters that they should no more give the people straw to make brick, as they had done before; but make them go and gather straw for themselves where they could find it; but yet to lay upon them the same tale of bricks without abatement: for, said he, "They are idle, and this is but a pretence to excuse them from their work." The task-masters acquainted their under officers with this severe injunction, who immediately declared it to the people; they accordingly were forced to wander about the country to seek for stubble instead of straw; the task-masters at the same time exacting from them their usual number of bricks; which when they were not able to perform, the under-officers, who were Israelites, and whom the task-masters had set over them, were called to account, and beaten. They, not well knowing from whence this severity proceeded, whether from the edict of the king, or the rigour of the

task-masters, complained to the king himself; and laying their grievance before him in the most humble manner, expostulated the matter with him thus: "Why should the king deal so severely with his servants? The task-masters allow us no straw, and yet demand brick of us, which is impossible to be done: and though they are in fault, yet are we punished."\*

The poor Israelite officers, instead of redress, meet with an addition to the cause of their complaint; the king tells them they shall have no straw, and yet deliver the full tale of bricks. This answer gave them much uneasiness, and drove them almost to despair; so that meeting with Moses and Aaron in the way, as they came from Pharaoh, and looking upon them as the occasion of these additional burthens, they, unadvisedly giving way to their

\* Bishop Lowth, in his *Notes on Isaiah*, has several passages which may serve to explain the making of bricks with straw.

"The eastern bricks are only clay well moistened with water, and mixed with straw, and dried in the sun, so that their walls are commonly no better than our mud walls. (See Sir John Chardin, Maundrell, and Harmer's *Obs.* p. 124.) That straw was a necessary part in the composition of this sort of bricks to make the parts of the clay adhere together, appears from *Exod. v.*"—Note on *Isa. ix. 9.*

"We are astonished at the accounts which ancient historians of the best credit give, of the immense extent, height and thickness of the walls of Nineveh and Babylon; nor are we less astonished, when we are assured, by the concurrent testimony of modern travellers, that no remains of these prodigious works are now to be found. Our wonder will, I think, be moderated in both respects, if we consider the fabric of these celebrated walls, and the nature of the materials of which they consisted. Buildings in the east have always been, and are to this day, made of earth or clay, mixed or beat up with straw to make the parts cohere, and dried only in the sun. The walls of the city were built of the earth dugged out on the spot and dried upon the place; by which means both the ditch and the wall were at once formed. A wall of this sort must have a great thickness in proportion to its height, otherwise it cannot stand. The walls of Babylon were one fourth of their height. Maundrell, speaking of the walls of Damascus, says, They are built of great pieces of earth, made in the fashion of bricks, two yards long, more than one broad, and half a yard thick, and dried in the sun. When a wall of this sort comes to be out of repair, in a course of ages it is totally destroyed by the heavy rains, and at length washed away."—Note on *Isa. xiii. 19.*



present passion, vented their grief and anger upon them, saying, "The Lord revenge\* us on you; for ye have made us hateful and abominable in the sight of the king and his subjects, and have given them occasion † to oppress us the more."

This was very distressing to Moses, who expected a more grateful return for his care and concern for them; wherefore, retiring from them he addressed himself to God in this humble expostulation: "Why, O Lord, hast thou thus afflicted this people? for since I spoke to Pharaoh in thy name, he hath treated them with more severity than before; and they are more unlikely than ever to be delivered." Moses' concern for the oppression of the Israelites made him forget the promise God had given him, and the perverseness of Pharaoh, which he had foretold: however, God, to encourage him, gives him this gracious answer, "I am the Lord, the Almighty God, that appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: was I not even known to them by my name JEHOVAH? ‡ Be assured that I the Lord, who

\* *Revenge.* Thus the Chaldee paraphrase, and not disagreeable to the Hebrews, who often by Metonymy take *judgment* for the bound or end of *judgment*. Thus to *judge* is often used for to *revenge*.

† *Occasion.* The text is in Exod. v. 21. "To have put a sword into their hand to slay us." Which cannot be literally taken here; for the Egyptians had both the civil and military sword always in their power, to use as they pleased. But this is a Scripture phrase, and is used to express any pungent calamity or affliction. Thus it is in Isa. lxxv. 16. and Amos. ix. 10.

‡ *Jehovah.* Almost all translations make God to say (Ex. vi. 3.) to Moses, that he was not known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by his name Jehovah, though God says expressly to the first of those patriarchs, "I am Jehovah, who brought thee from Ur of the Chaldeans," Gen. xv. 7, and that Abraham himself says to the king of Sodom, "I have lift up my hands unto Jehovah, the most High Possessor of Heaven and earth," Gen. xiv. 22, and that Moses observes that men began to call upon the name of Jehovah in the days of Seth. Interpreters take much pains to adjust this seeming contradiction, to preserve to Moses the pretended privilege of having first known God by the name of Jehovah: but if they would consider that the Hebrew particle *Lo*, which is in the original, is often taken interrogatively, they would readily grant that it is to be taken so in this place. In some copies of the Septuagint this text is rendered "I have even manifested

“ made a covenant with their fathers to give to their posterity the land of Canaan, have heard their complaints and remembered my promise. Therefore say thus to the children of Israel, I am JEHOVAH, who exist only of myself, and give existence to all beings. Tell them I will deliver them from the Egyptian slavery with the power of my almighty arm, and inflict heavy judgments on those who oppress them. Nor will I merely deliver you from this bondage, but I will take you under my immediate protection; ye shall be my people, and I will be your God, and ye shall know that I am JEHOVAH your God; who will release you from the oppressions of Egypt; and I will bring you into the land, concerning which I lifted\* up my hand in confirmation that I would give it to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in their posterity; and I will give it you for an inheritance. I am JEHOVAH, the Lord, who do promise this, and who can and will perform it.”

Moses accordingly repairs to the children of Israel, and delivers his message as God had commanded: but they, considering the sad increase of their servitude, ever since Moses undertook to be their deliverer, were so prejudiced against him, that they would not believe him. Upon which he left them, till either the extremity of their sufferings, or the hand of God, eminently appearing in plaguing their oppressors, should awaken them to a greater desire of deliverance. But God, pursuing the ends of his providence, commands Moses to go to the king of

myself to them by my name Jehovah.” The most learned Rabbies also have not understood it otherwise, when they observe that this particle is not absolutely negative, but comparative, as in several other places of Scripture; particularly where the versions in Gen. xxxii. 28. make God to say, “Thy name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel,” though that patriarch was afterwards often called by his first name, as we have already observed. We must therefore rectify this by translating, “Was not I even known to them by my name Jehovah?” Which takes away the seeming contradiction, and resolves all the difficulties that may be proposed on this subject.

\* *Lifted.* This is a phrase often used in Scripture to express swearing, which was usually done by lifting up of hands: thus we find it in Gen. xiv. 22. Numb. xiv. 30. Deut. xxxii. 40. and in many other places.

Egypt, and demand the liberty of his people. Moses, having but a little before been so roughly dismissed from Pharaoh's presence, and so unkindly rejected by the Israelites, declines the errand by drawing an argument from each: "Since the children of Israel, thine own people would not hear me, though what I offered was so much to their advantage, how can I expect that so wicked a prince as Pharaoh should give credit to such a stammerer\* as I am, in a matter so much to his loss?" But the Lord, as before, is still patient in hearing and removing Moses' objections; and therefore tells him, "Consider I have made thee as a God† to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy interpreter, or orator. Thou shalt tell him all that I have commanded thee, and ye shall demand of Pharaoh the deliverance of my people. And that thou mayest not be discouraged by a repulse, as before, take notice that Pharaoh shall give no credit to what thou sayest, that I may thereby shew my power and wonders on him and his people, and deliver the children of Israel by the strength of my hand: for since Pharaoh hath begun to harden his heart in contemptuously treating me, and abusing my people, I will now permit him to go on in his obstinate humour that I may exert my power in miraculous operations in the land of Egypt. Therefore when ye come into Pharaoh's presence, and he shall demand a miracle of

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\* *Stammerer.* The word in the text, Exod. vi. 12. is rendered, "Who am of uncircumcised lips," that is slow of speech; for Moses laboured under a defect in his tongue, as he urged, when God first pitched upon him to undertake the deliverance of his people. But the word *uncircumcised* is phraseologically used upon several occasions by the Hebrews, as when they call any one *uncircumcised in heart, mind, or tongue*, they mean one that labours under a defect in any of these. Besides, as circumcision was the first and greatest sacrament among them, so uncircumcision was esteemed by them the greatest scandal and disgrace.

† *God.* That is, by exercising the judgments of God upon him, thou shalt be as terrible to him as God. He was to act as the representative of Jehovah, and in his name to call upon the proud monarch to submit, and to punish his disobedience with the most tremendous calamities.



“ you, thou shalt direct Aaron to cast his rod on the  
“ ground before Pharaoh, and it shall be turned into a ser-  
“ pent.” Thus instructed they appear before Pharaoh,  
and deliver their message, which he rejecting, Aaron cast  
down his rod before the king, in the presence of his  
servants, and it became a serpent. To confront this mi-  
racle, the king presently sends for his magicians,\* who  
by their enchantments perform the same that Aaron did  
by God’s immediate power: for, throwing down their  
rods, they became, in appearance, serpents; yet, with this  
difference, that Aaron’s rod devoured theirs, and resumed  
its wonted form.

This harmless miracle made no impression on the obsti-  
nate tyrant, for it had no mischievous effect either on him  
or his people, who looked on it merely as a trial of skill  
between artists: therefore God resolves to make use of  
more sensible scourges, and afflict the Egyptians with such  
a succession of plagues, as should compel them to dis-  
miss the enslaved Israelites; and having observed to Mo-  
ses, that Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, he bid him take  
the rod, which had been turned into a serpent, and pre-  
sent himself to Pharaoh’s view, at his usual time of com-  
ing to the banks of the river Nile; giving him this far-  
ther instruction: “ Tell him that the Almighty God of  
“ the Hebrews hath sent thee to him; and though he  
“ hath been so obstinate hitherto to detain the Israelites,  
“ their God will afflict him for his perverseness: that he  
“ will make him sensible by his judgments, which he will  
“ inflict upon him and his people:” and to encourage  
Moses in the execution of his commission, he promises

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\* *Magicians.* Two of whom, probably the most eminent of the company, are  
by the Apostle named Jannes and Jambres, 2 Tim. iii. 8. not from any place of the  
Old Testament, but from some other records of the Jews; as divers other things  
mentioned in the New Testament, viz. Moses’ being brought up in the Egyptian  
learning, Acts vii v. 22. and so likewise of his being forty years of age, v. 23.  
when he went to visit his brethren, which is not in Exod. ii. As also his having  
beforehand either some instinct or revelation from God, that he should be a *Deliverer*  
*of his people*, which seems to be referred to in Acts vii. 25. but is not in the  
Old Testament.



his assistance in the performance of the first miracle, which was turning the water of the river into blood.

Moses obeys; and, at the appointed time, waits the coming of the king to the river,\* and throwing himself in the way, accosts him with this message. The infidel prince, obdurate to all the rhetoric of the two heavenly missionaries, persists in his resolution (so little did the first miracle affect him;) and though Moses and Aaron admonished him of the omnipotence of their God, he would not believe them. Upon which, Aaron receiving the rod from Moses, lifted it up as God had commanded, and striking the water, it was turned into blood;† which immediately stagnating, grew so offensive with its poisonous putrefaction, that the fish were suffocated, and the inhabitants obliged to dig for water in new places to allay their thirst. And notwithstanding this plague continued seven days, yet Pharaoh was still obstinate; and the more,

\* *River.* This is the river *Nile*, which is, on several accounts, the most famous river in the world. It is called in Scripture *Nachal Misraim*, the River of Egypt: from whence the word *Nile* is not unnaturally derived *Nabal*, *Naal*, *Neel*, *Neil*. And Pomponius Mela, *l. 5. c. 10.* reports, That the fountain of the *Nile* is called *Nachul* by the Ethiopians. Now whereas God says to Moses, *Exod. vii. 15.* "Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he shall go forth to the water," we may reasonably suppose, as the Persians every morning worshipped the rising sun, so the Egyptians every morning adored the Nile, and that this going forth of the king to the river was a constant act of devotion: and it is not unlikely, that their great deity *Osiris* was worshipped for *Nilus*. The fountain of this river was said to be in the mountains called the *Mountains of the Moon*, and one of the titles of *Prester John* is, *King of Goyome*, where the Nile arises: but the ancients maintained that among the peculiarities of the Nile, it concealed its spring, of which *Lucan* takes notice in his tenth book. Its sources are now, however, ascertained to be in *Abyssinia*, in *lat. 12°*, and after a winding course through that country, it enters *Egypt*, and inundates it annually the space of 600 miles. Its inundations are caused by the great rains between the tropics when the sun is in the northern signs.

† *Blood.* *Theodoret* upon *Exodus*, says thus of this change of the waters of the Nile: "Being changed into blood they accused the Egyptians of the murder of the infants." And the book of *Wisdom xi. 6.* makes the same observation: "Instead of a fountain of running water, the enemies were troubled with corrupt blood, which was to rebuke the commandment of the killing of the children."

because Moses being known to have had his education among the Egyptians, the king concluded, that all this was performed by magick. Wherefore, calling for his magicians he put them upon the same trial; who taking some of the water which the Egyptians had digged, by their enchantments they made him believe that they turned it to blood. And though this was but a delusion, yet it convinced Pharaoh that what Moses and Aaron had done, was not the effect of any supernatural power, but a mere trick of art, and thereupon he determined to detain the Israelites.

But Heaven pursues him with repeated miracles; for as soon as the seven days are expired, Moses, at the command of God, accosts him again, and renews his instances for the delivery of the Israelites; threatening upon his refusal to bring upon the land such a prodigious number of frogs, as should visit him and his subjects in their most private recesses. Pharaoh, regardless of his threats, defies him; upon which, Moses gives Aaron order\* to take the rod, and stretch forth his hand with it over the river, which in an instant so affected all the waters of Egypt, that, not waiting for the slow productions of nature, the animated streams unburthen themselves upon the land in shoals of frogs; which immediately invade all parts, infesting even the royal palace with their ungrateful croaking. Now again, Pharaoh had recourse to his magicians, who by their mimic power so deluded him, that they led him to suppose they wrought the same miracle; which hardened Pharaoh for a while; but the loathsome plague pursuing him and his people wherever they went, he is forced to apply to Moses and Aaron for relief, offering to capitulate with their God upon terms of permission for them to go and sacrifice to him. Moses demands the time when this shall be put to an issue, and they both agree upon the next day. Accordingly Moses addresses himself to God, and the frogs soon died, which the peo-

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\* *Order.* It may be observed from Exod. vii. 19. and viii. 5. that Aaron received order from Moses to perform the miracles, who was the director or sovereign, and gave to Aaron the power delegated to him from God.

ple gathered in heaps, so that the land stank of them before they could be disposed of.

The infidel prince, thinking the God of the Hebrews had discharged all his plagues, unfaithfully breaks his word, and refuses to let the Israelites go. This violation so provokes the Almighty, that he resolves to treat the haughty tyrant in a more surprising manner than he had hitherto done; for before, he first denounced his judgments, giving him warning, that he might escape them: but now he will give him no further notice; and therefore commands Moses to direct Aaron to stretch out his rod and strike the dust with it, that it might become lice.\* Aaron obeys, and straightway the animated dust turns into swarms of vermin, which the magicians, who had faintly imitated the former plagues, now attempt in vain; they own their art out-done, and acknowledge this to be the inimitable work of a divine hand.

Yet now again, notwithstanding the obstinacy of Pharaoh, who would not in the least hearken to Moses and Aaron, God condescended to give him another summons. "Rise up (says God to Moses) early in the morning, and meet Pharaoh as he comes to the river: tell him, thus

\* *Lice*. What kind of creature this was, is not certainly known, the versions and commentators differing very much in their opinion of it. The Septuagint translate it here, and in Psal. cv. 31. *Knipes*, and so Philo and the Vulgate edition retain the word; which seems to come from the word *Knizein*, which signifies to prick, and they were a kind of Gnat. In this Pliny, Columella, Hesychius and Origen agree. Yet Junius and Tremellius, the French, English and various other translations render it *Lice*, and *lice* too might have wings. It seems to us most probable, that it was some new kind of creature called analogically by an old known name, which is Pererin's conjecture, and is approved by Rivett. And this we take to be the reason why the magicians could not counterfeit this miracle, as it was easy for them to do those of the serpent, the blood and the frogs, which were things to be had every where. This, we think may pass for a more probable cause than the fancy of the Hebrews, who say, That the devil's power is bounded to the producing of no creature less than a grain of barley; or than St. Augustine's allegorical reason, and too poetical even for poetry, who affirms that the magicians failed in the third plague, to shew the defect of human philosophy when it comes to the mystery of the Trinity!

“ saith the Lord ; let my people go that they may serve  
 “ me, or I will send swarms of flies\* upon thee and thy  
 “ people, which shall fill their houses, and cover the face  
 “ of the earth : and that thou mayest know, that this is  
 “ brought as a judgment upon thee and thy subjects for  
 “ oppressing my people, I will on that day separate  
 “ the land of Goshen, in which my servants dwell, from  
 “ the rest of Egypt, that the flies shall not molest them.”

Accordingly, upon Pharaoh's not submitting, the next day, clouds of swarming insects fill the air, which in numberless troops descend to the earth, and with their sullen and unusual noise surprise and affright the wretched inhabitants. All attempts prove vain and fruitless to remove this increasing evil ; their most private retirements cannot secure them from the poisonous bitings of these revengeful animals, and a succession of painful miseries invade them on all hands. The sword and spear are useless to repel this airy foe, whose penetrating sting is sharper than their point. The magicians with confusion look upon this direful plague, and no more attempt any imitation : a general horror pervades the towns and fields, and all the country echoes with the cries of tortured men and cattle. Pharaoh, unable to support this plague, calls presently for Moses and Aaron, and in a sullen discontented tone bids them go and sacrifice to their God, but not beyond the bounds of Egypt. He was desirous of relief, but unwilling to part with a people, by whose slavery he had reaped so great advantage ; and being a stranger and enemy to the true God, he did not conceive that the Israelites could not acceptably sacrifice to their

\* *Flies.* So our English translation. St. Jerome says, *all sorts of flies.* The Septuagint *Kunomwbyan*, a particular kind of fly, called a *Dog-fly*, from his biting. Some translate this a *mixture of beasts* : the French, *une meslee de bestes*, Junius and Tremellius, Colluuiem, and Josephus seems to understand it of several sorts of wild beasts that infested the country ; which is not very probable, for the punishments hitherto were rather troublesome than mortal ; though this punishment of infinite numbers of small tormentors is so great a one that God calls them *his army*, Joel ii. 25. nay his *great army*, “ The locust, the canker-worm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm, my great army, which I sent among you.”



God while under the Egyptian bondage. Moses, not willing to provoke, but rather to convince Pharaoh, discreetly answered; "We cannot sacrifice to our God in this land, for that would be an affront\* to the Egyptians, and they will be revenged on us. Permit us therefore to avoid their resentment, by going three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to our God as he hath commanded us." "If nothing else will serve you, (said Pharaoh) but going into the desert, I will suffer you to go, but not far: and in return for this concession, intreat your God to remove this plague." Moses promised to intercede for him, but cautions Pharaoh to be sincere in his grant; and being gone from his presence addressed himself to God to remove the plague of flies. His prayers are heard, and the insects take their flight; but Pharaoh no sooner found himself relieved from this judgment, than he returns to his former obstinacy, and positively forbade the Israelites to stir out of his dominions.

Upon this high provocation, God sent Moses again to Pharaoh with this message: "Thus saith the God of the Hebrews; let my people go that they may serve me, or be assured I will visit all thy cattle that are in the field with a grievous murrain; and to make thee still more sensible of my omnipotence, I will, by a wonderful distinction, preserve the cattle of my people, while I destroy those of the Egyptians." This, by Pharaoh's obstinacy, was fatally verified upon the Egyptian cattle the next day: the generous horse loaths his full manger and delicious pasture, and sinks under his rider; the ass and camel can no longer support their burdens, or their own weight; the labouring ox drops down dead before the plough; the harmless sheep expire bleating, and the faithful dogs lie gasping beside them.

Though Pharaoh saw one part of nature extinct before

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\* *Affront.* That is, if we should sacrifice those creatures which the Egyptians worship for Gods, as the ox and the sheep, they will be affronted to see us sacrifice their gods to our God.

his eyes, he continued his former temper, and resolved still to brave heaven with his impious perverseness. And remembering what Moses said of the preservation of the Israelites' cattle, he sends to Goshen to learn how it had fared with them; and was assured there is not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead; by which he might have seen that this was no casualty, but a direct judgment upon him, exactly answering the divine prediction. Notwithstanding this, he will not be convinced, but continues in his former resolution not to let the Israelites go.

Therefore since neither admonitions nor threats will prevail, God resolves to surprise him with another plague without giving him any warning; and immediately commands Moses and Aaron to take handfuls of ashes from the furnace, and before Pharaoh's face, to throw them in the air. The pregnant ashes soon spread the dire contagion, and the tainted air affects the Egyptians' blood with its poisonous influence; which soon appears upon their skin in swelling scabs\* and ulcers, and their whole persons become a noisome spring of sores. This plague was so torturing, that the magicians (who possibly once more would have tried their skill to see if they could regain their credit) were not able to stand before Moses, for it affected them as well as the rest of the Egyptians.

And now Pharaoh, whose obstinacy before proceeded from his natural aversion to the servants of the true God, is judicially hardened by the Almighty Lord, who resolves to make him a monument of his power to all posterity. He makes the powers of Heaven the instruments of his revenge, and calling to Moses, he gives him this charge; "Go early in the morning to the king of Egypt, and tell

\* Scabs, &c. This by Moses, Exod. ix. 10. is called *Ulcus inflationum germinans in homine*, &c. Sprouting out with blains, &c. which Junius and Tremellius render, *Erumpens multis pullulis*. This in Deut. xviii. 27. is one of the curses with which disobedience to God is threatened, "The Lord shall smite thee with the botch of Egypt," &c. From hence probably came the calumny which Trog. Pompeius, Diod. Siculus, Tacitus, and other heathens cast upon the Hebrews, viz. that they were expelled Egypt for being scabbed and leprous, which mistake was eas. instead of being dismissed for having brought those diseases upon the Egyptians.

“ him, that I, the God of the Hebrews, demand the liberty  
 “ of my people, that they may worship me ; which if he  
 “ refuse, he may be assured I will shower my plagues\*  
 “ upon him and his people ; and I will make him know,  
 “ that I am the only God on earth. Say further to him :  
 “ If, † when lately I smote the cattle with the murrain, I  
 “ had smitten thee and thy people with pestilence, thou  
 “ hadst been cut off from the earth. But I have reserved  
 “ thee to shew my power, and by the judgments I shall  
 “ inflict upon thee, I will proclaim my name to all the  
 “ world. Oppress not, nor detain my people ; for if  
 “ thou dost, to-morrow ‡ by this time, (unless thou sub-  
 “ mittest thyself) I will send such a storm of hail from  
 “ heaven upon Egypt, as never was known since it was a  
 “ nation. § And that thou mayest not lose what cattle the  
 “ murrain left, (which being not in the field escaped that  
 “ plague) send thy servants, and let them drive them un-  
 “ der shelter ; for upon every man and beast, which shall  
 “ be found in the field, the storm shall fall, and they shall  
 “ surely die.”

This threatening message did not so far affect Pharaoh as to induce a sufficient care of himself or people ; but

\* *Plagues.* By plagues in this place (viz. Exod. ix. 14) is not meant, that God would send all the plagues which he afterwards inflicted successively, but those which attended this plague from heaven, as hail, thunder, lightning, and rain.

† *If, &c.* Here God shews that he wanted not power to destroy Pharaoh and his subjects for oppressing his people Israel ; but that he reserved him for greater punishments : and therefore the Chaldee paraphrase renders Exod. ix. 15. “ If when I lately smote the cattle with the murrain, I had smitten thee and thy people with pestilence, thou hadst been cut off from the earth.” And this God said to let the Egyptians know, that he did not do this only to threaten them, but that he was able to cut them off when he pleased, by the same power that had before destroyed the cattle.

‡ *Morrow.* It is very common in Scripture to find the particular time expressed ; which is used only to shew the certainty of providence.

§ *A nation.* Egypt was first inhabited by Mesraim (whence it is called in Hebrew, Mesraim, and to this day by the Turks, Mesra) the son of Cham.

some of them, who had been witnesses\* of the dreadful wrath of God, made a prudent use of the divine caution, and housed their cattle in time, by which means they were preserved.

And now the time appointed being come, Moses attends the hardened king, and to verify the last dreadful threatening, waves his wonder-working rod in the air, which soon began to murmur in imperfect sounds, till the full-charged clouds with impetuous force burst, and discharged themselves in such terrible peals of thunder, as shook the whole frame of nature. This was succeeded by a stony shower of monstrous hail, such as winter never yet produced from her stormy magazines, which covered the ground with the scattered ruins of trees and houses, and the dead bodies of men and beasts. Nor does the divine vengeance stop here; the heavens become a body of liquid fire, which, darting on the ground, glides over the waters, and fills every place with dreadful horror. This shocks the haughty tyrant, who seeing nature (as he imagines) ready to dissolve, melts into penitence, and confesses himself guilty. But this being an act of necessity, not of virtue, it dies with his fear, which Moses foresaw; for when Pharaoh begged him to intercede with God for him, and to remove this plague, Moses tells him he will comply with his request, but assures him he knows he does not mean to act sincerely, and that his repentance was only the effect of his terror. Of this the Lord (as he had done before) gave Moses notice: "I have hardened his heart, said he, and the hearts of his servants, that I may shew these my wonders before them, and that thou mayest tell in the hearing of thy sons, and the Israelites to succeeding generations, what prodigies I have wrought in Egypt; that ye may all know that I am the Lord, the Almighty Jehovah. Where-

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\* *Witnesses.* Exod. ix. 20. It is said of those that secured their cattle by housing them before the storm, that "they feared the Lord;" which implies not a reverential fear, but a servile fear, into which they had been terrified by the judgments God had inflicted on them.



“ fore go to Pharaoh, and tell him ; Thus saith the Lord  
 “ God of the Hebrews, Why dost thou persist in thy ob-  
 “ stinacy ? Let my people go, that they may serve me,  
 “ or I will bring the locust into thy land to-morrow,  
 “ which shall come in such swarms, as shall cover the  
 “ surface of the earth, and devour all those productions\*  
 “ of it which have escaped the former plagues. And this  
 “ shall prove such a plague as none of thy predecessors  
 “ ever saw.”

Moses, having delivered this message to Pharaoh, with-  
 drew ; which the courtiers perceiving, and fearing Moses  
 was gone to call down more plagues upon them, very  
 roughly accost their king, desiring him to let the Israelites  
 go to serve their God, lest he destroyed them all for his  
 obstinacy. Their importunity prevailed more than God’s  
 threatenings and judgments ; therefore sending for Moses  
 and Aaron, he told them they might go and serve their  
 God ; but only the men, not the women nor the children.  
 Moses insisted upon all the Israelites going, young and  
 old, sons and daughters ; nay, and their flocks and herds,  
 “ For we must hold a feast (says he) to the mighty Jeho-  
 “ vah, and all must be present.” This put Pharaoh out  
 of temper, for he looked upon this demand as very insol-  
 ent ; therefore he bade them look to it, and consider well  
 what they insisted on, and in a very threatening manner  
 dismissed them.

Moses being thus again repulsed, by God’s command  
 stretched out his hand with the rod in it, and immediately  
 a scorching† hot wind blew all that day and the night fol-  
 lowing, which by the next morning drove endless legions  
 of devouring locusts‡ among them, which left the earth as

\* *Productions.* That is, the wheat and the rye, Exod. ix. 3. which before had not sprouted out of the earth.

† *Scorching, &c.* Our translation has *east wind*. The Vulgate *ventum urentem*, a *burning wind*. The Septuagint, a *south wind* ; but the Jews unanimously conclude it to have been an *east wind*.

‡ *Locusts.* This creature in shape resembles the grass-hopper, but is considerably larger and much more voracious. Wonderful are the accounts which authors report of these kinds of armies of locusts, and of the order and regula-

naked and barren as if the northern storms of winter had invaded it: The productions of the fertile Nile, and all that bountiful nature afforded, was carried off by these airy pillagers. Pharaoh began to be a little more sensibly touched with this plague than any of the former; for he plainly foresaw that the destruction of the fruits of the earth must in time prove the destruction of man and beast; therefore calling hastily for Moses and Aaron, he in a more suppliant manner than usual addresses himself to them: "I have indeed offended your God by refusing to obey his command, and you by breaking my word so often with you; forgive me this offence, and intreat your God to avert this judgment, that I and my people perish not by devouring famine." Moses answers his request, and immediately retiring, prayed to God, who by a strong westerly wind drove the locusts into the Red Sea.\*

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rity of their marches. Aldrovandus and Fincelius, say, that in the year of our Lord 852, they were seen to fly over twenty miles in Germany in one day, in the manner of an army, divided into several squadrons, and having their quarters apart when they rested: that the captain marched a day's journey before the rest, to choose the most opportune places for their camp; that they never removed till sun rising; at which time they went away in as much order as an army of men could do: that at last, having done great mischief wheresoever they passed, after prayers made to God, they were driven by a violent wind into the Belgic Ocean, and there drowned; but being cast again by the sea upon the shore, caused a great pestilence in the country. Some add that they covered a hundred and forty acres of land at a time, St. Jerome upon Joel speaks thus: "When the armies of Locusts came lately into these parts, and filled all the air, they flew in so great order, that slates in a pavement cannot be laid more regularly, neither did they stir one inch out of their ranks." There are reckoned thirty several sorts of locusts by Pliny. See *l. 11. c. 29.* The countries bordering on the Red Sea are often rendered desolate by them.

\* *Red Sea.* Various are the opinions of interpreters about the epithet *Red* given to this sea. Some suppose it to be so called from the reflection of the sun upon it from the red mountains near it. Others that it is naturally red of itself. Pliny, *lib. 6. cap. 23.* says, it is called by the Greeks, *Erythreum Mare*, or *Red Sea*, from *Erythrea* the king, and son of *Perseus*, whose sepulchre is reported to be in *Tirina*, an island of the Red Sea. Others are of opinion, that it is called so from the red sand or coral, with which this sea abounds, and this they confirm from

This plague thus removed, Pharaoh returns to his former obstinacy and contempt of God's commands, and refuses to let the Israelites go. Wherefore God bids Moses stretch forth his hand towards heaven, that there might be a darkness over the land of Egypt, so thick that it might be felt.\* Moses obeys the heavenly command, and immediately, from the caverns of eternal night, such solid clouds of darkness invaded the sky, that nature all at once seemed to be involved in one dreadful eclipse; the sun no longer gladdened the lower world with his cheerful beams; the silver moon, with her borrowed light, and all the glittering lamps of heaven, no longer illumine the darkened air; and all things put on the dismal aspect of death, as if nature were returning to her original chaos. This scene of horror lasted for three days, which so affected the haughty king, that though he had long stood immoveable against the terrors of the Almighty, yet now, fearing an universal dissolution, and frightened at the continual terrors† of this long night, he begins to relent,

Pliny, who *l. 32. c. 2.* owns that it abounds in coral. But whatever the versions render it, it is certain the Hebrew word *Supb* signifies a bound, and it is by them called the Sea of the Bound, because of the boundaries between Arabia and the Holy Land, not far distant from it. The word *Supb* also signifies a storm, and thence it is also called the Stormy Sea. It likewise signifies *sedge*, or a *rush*, and thence called the Sedgy or Rushy Sea. Its waters differ no way in colour from that of other seas.

\* *Felt.* So the Septuagint and most translations render it. Some will have this to be a hyperbolical expression, to set forth the excess of this plague: though whether this darkness was really in the air, or only in their eyes, which might be blinded for a time; or whether a suspension of light from that country; or whether it were from a black, thick, and damp vapour, which possessed all the air, it is impossible to determine. Some suppose that the darkness of hell below, which is called *outer darkness*, arose and overshadowed the land, agreeably to the Wisdom of Solomon, xvii. 13. where he calls it a night that came upon them out of the *dungeon of hell*; and therefore was the more proper to be (as he says after) an image of that darkness which should afterwards receive them.

† *Terrors.* It is the opinion of several, that during this three days' darkness the Egyptians were affrighted with terrible visions and spectres; which opi-

and calling for Moses, says to him, "Ye may go with your little ones and serve the Lord; but for my security, I will have you leave your flocks and herds behind you." This was a poor advance beyond what he had before offered, and which Moses peremptorily rejects; assuring him, that it was the express command of their God to remove with all their substance, and that they knew not in what manner they were to offer sacrifice to their God till they came to the wilderness. This proposal so offended Pharaoh, that in great displeasure and impatience he commands him to be gone; and assures him that if he ever again appeared before him, it should cost him his life. Moses takes him at his word, and promises never more to see his face; but before he left his presence, he denounces this judgment to him; "Thus saith the Lord, about midnight will I enter Egypt, and all the first-born of the land shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that should succeed him in the throne, to the first-born of the servant in the mill; and all the first-born of beasts shall die." Then to possess Pharaoh and his subjects with the greater fear of this judgment, he told them there should be such lamentation throughout all Egypt as was never before known: and to convince them of his care over his own people, he tells the Egyptians, that not the least harm should befall the Israelites. And though the king still bids him defiance, to let him see he despised his threats, he tells him, he will so humble his subjects with the succeeding plague, that even his counsellors and prime ministers of state should come and fall down at his feet, and intreat him and the Israelites to be gone: and after that, said Moses, I will go out. Having thus delivered his last message to the king of Egypt, with a more than usual warmth of zeal, he took his leave.

The Israelites, during their long and grievous bondage,

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tion is very much strengthened by Wisdom xvii. 6, 14. and Psalm lxxviii. 50. Undoubtedly from such unusual darkness they conceived the whole order of the world to be overset and dissolved.



were possessors of no great wealth, their tyrannical masters, no doubt, taking care to keep them bare enough; therefore God, to encourage Moses to support them in their deliverance, promises them favour in the eyes of the Egyptians, with instruction to borrow of them the most valuable things they had.

It was on the fourteenth day of the first month\* that Moses took leave of Pharaoh; and God having predetermined the deliverance of his people at that very time, had instituted the passover some days before, and given direction to Moses how it should be observed; which was after this manner. Every family of Israel (or if the family was too little, two neighbouring families joining together) was, on the tenth day of this month, to take a lamb, or kid, and shut it up till the fourteenth day of this month; and then it was to be killed. The lamb or kid must be a male of the first year, and without blemish: [a type of Christ, who was perfectly innocent.] When it was killed, they were to take a bunch of hyssop, and dipping it in the blood, which for that end was preserved in a vessel, they were to sprinkle the upper door-post, and the side-posts of the outer door of every house, out of which they were not to stir till the next morning. This was done to the intent, that when the angel of the Lord should go from house to house through all Egypt, to slay the first-born of both man and beast of

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\* *Month.* The Israelites, till they had been captives in Babylon, which was about eight hundred years after they came out of Egypt, counted their months without any name, according to their number, the first, second, third month, &c. and before their coming out of Egypt, they began their year in that month, which was afterwards called Tisri, (which took in part of the seventh and part of the eighth month with us) and they continued always after to begin their year with that month for civil affairs. According to which computation, that month, which was afterwards called Nisan, in which God delivered Israel out of Egypt, was their seventh. But in honour of that great work, God appointed (Ex. xii. 2.) that "this should be the beginning of months, the first month in the year to them:" that is, with respect to their most solemn feasts and religious affairs; their civil concerns they reckoned from September. And this Nisan answers to part of those two months, which from the Heathen Romans are commonly called March and April. See Godwin, *l. 3. c. 1.*

the Egyptians, he, seeing the blood sprinkled on the door-posts, might *pass over* those houses, wherein the Israelites were eating the lamb or kid, without doing them any hurt : and from the angel thus passing over their houses, this institution was called the *Passover*. The lamb or kid was to be eaten, neither raw nor soddened, but roasted with fire, and to be dressed whole ; nor might a bone of it be broken. It was to be eaten with unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs, in memory of the severe bondage they had undergone in Egypt. If there remained more than could be eaten, it was to be burnt, and no stranger might eat of it, unless he were circumcised. As to the manner of eating it, at this time only, they were to eat it as in haste, with their clothes on, and their staves in their hands : which ceremony indicated their eager desire of deliverance, and their readiness for it.\*

All things thus prepared for their departure, at midnight the Lord† smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh, to the first-born

\* The New Testament affords us a valuable comment on this remarkable institution. St. Paul says, Heb. xi. 28. "By faith Moses kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them ;" he also says, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. "Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us." Our safety is derived from faith in him, for if we eat the flesh of the Son of God, and his blood be sprinkled on our consciences, no destruction can possibly approach us. But, if this provision of mercy be neglected, we must remain in worse than Egyptian bondage, and shall soon be cut down by the hand of an avenging God.

† *Lord*. Some think God inflicted this plague upon the Egyptians immediately himself ; because he says, Exod. xi. 14. "About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt." And to the same effect, *cb.* xii. 12. But it is an ordinary manner of speech to ascribe that to God, which is done by one of his angels ; and that this was an angel appears from *cb.* xii. 23. "The Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you." From which place, and Psalm lxxviii. 49. where it is said of the Egyptians, "He cast his wrath upon them by sending evil angels among them ;" some collect that God used here the ministry of an evil angel : but it cannot be supposed that God and the magicians had the same agents. Junius and Tremellius understand by it Moses and Aaron as messengers of evil ; and if we interpret it (as others) of

of the captive\* that was in the dungeon ; and all the first-born of the cattle were smitten, as the Lord had that morning denounced to Pharaoh and Moses. The infidel king and his affrighted subjects now believe the God of Israel to be in earnest with them ; they awake each other with their dismal cries, and the horror of the night adds to their confusion ; the expiring groans of their beloved first-born deeply affect them, and they expect a succession of death upon themselves : which Pharaoh hoping to avert, in haste sends for Moses and Aaron, and commands them to be gone with all speed. “ Get you forth (says he) “ from among my people, both you and the “ children of Israel, and go serve your God as ye have “ said ; and take your flocks and your herds, as ye demanded, and be gone : I will stand no longer on terms “ with you, only pray for me, that this plague may go “ no further.” Nor were the people less importunate for them to be gone ; for they concluded, that if the Israelites tarried any longer among them, that they should all perish.

Moses having, by God’s express command,† directed the children of Israel to borrow of their Egyptian neighbours jewels of silver and gold, and the Lord having disposed the Egyptians to lend them what they asked for, they by these means spoiled‡ the Egyptians of their most valuable effects. Nay, so urgent were they for the departure of Israel, that they forced them away, not suffer-

angels, it were better rendered in English, Destroying or Punishing Angels, inflictors of evil upon them.

\* *Captive.* That is, those meaner servants, that are put to grinding, as Samson afterwards was, when he had lost at once both his eyes and liberty. Judges xvi. 21.

† *Command.* See Exod. xi. 2, 3.

‡ *Spoiled.* This was not to be drawn into an example, how excusable and justifiable soever in the Israelites, on the account that God, who is the sovereign Lord of all, both persons and things, did so order it ; and had it might be looked on as a just retribution for the many and great injuries done by the Egyptians to the Israelites.

ing them to finish their bread, but obliging them to tie up their dough in cloths, and carry it away on their backs unbaked. Thus, after Egypt was in a manner destroyed, and the Egyptians of all ranks had suffered so deeply for detaining the Israelites, they now on a sudden thrust them out, as God had foretold,\* and drove them away in haste. Notwithstanding which, Moses did not forget to take the bones of Joseph,† which he, dying in the faith of their deliverance, had solemnly engaged the children of Israel to carry‡ up with them out of Egypt, and which had now lain embalmed more than a hundred and forty years.

The Israelites began their journey at midnight on the fifteenth day of the first month,§ being Tuesday the fifth of May, by our computation, the very night after the Passover was instituted, and the first-born of Egypt slain. It was precisely four hundred and thirty years after Abraham first went down into Egypt, and one thousand four hundred and ninety-one years before Christ. Their number, it is supposed, was full two millions, comprising six hundred thousand men, besides women and children.

The place of general rendezvous for the Israelites was Rameses|| the chief city of Goshen; from whence they set forward as regularly as a well ordered army, and marched to Succoth. With them went out a mixed multitude who were not Israelites, but strangers of several nations, who having seen the calamities that Egypt had suffered for the sake of Israel, chose rather to seek their fortune with the Israelites than tarry in a country rendered almost desolate.

And now while their deliverance was fresh in their memory, God, by Moses, commanded the people of Israel, that when they should be brought into the land of Canaan,

\* *Foretold.* See Exod. xi. 1.

† *Joseph.* Exod. xiii. 19.

‡ *Carry.* Gen. i. 25.

§ *First Month.* This was afterwards called Nisan and Abib, which takes in part of the first, and part of the second month with us.

|| *Rameses.* Exod. xii. 37.



they should set apart and devote to the Lord their first-born both of man and beast, in remembrance\* that God, for their sakes, had slain all the first-born in Egypt.

The Israelites being to dislodge from Succoth, the Lord, for their encouragement and security, went before them in the day time in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire, to direct and guide them; and, as the Philistines' country was the nearest for them to pass, lest they, seeing the Philistines with an armed force oppose their passage, should repent of their deliverance, and wilfully turn back to Egypt, he led them about through the Wilderness of the Red Sea, and marching them to Etham, they encamped there on the borders of the Wilderness, which took its name from that place. From thence, drawing them down more to the Red Sea, he caused them to encamp there, between the straits of the mountains in sight of the sea. This position of the Israelites was intended by the Divine Providence, as an inducement to Pharaoh to pursue them, from his full expectation that he should find them inclosed on all hands, without the

\* *Remembrance.* This remembrance is twice expressed in the thirteenth of Exod. v. 9. 16. and undoubtedly cannot be taken in a literal sense. The Jews indeed, have fallen into the most ridiculous absurdities on this subject. St. Jerome observes, that the superstition of their Philacteries owes its rise to their having taken literally the commandments which God had given them in Exod. xiii. 9. 16. "To bind his laws for a sign on their hands, and to have them as frontlets, before their eyes," that is, to obey them and keep them in remembrance, or as the margin in our English version, "Thou shalt have a continual remembrance thereof, as of a thing that is in thy hand, or before thy eyes." But the literal translation which the pharisees put on the words, led the Jews to believe that they contained an express precept of writing on a piece of parchment, with a great deal of formality and ceremony; and binding them to their forehead and left arm with great devotion. Those who complied with this method, were looked upon as the most religious, though, in fact, there is nothing more superstitious and ridiculous. Now in this place God cannot be supposed to direct any of these superstitions: for he does not speak of the Decalogue, which the Jews used to wear in their Phylacteries, but of the precept of the Passover, and Unleavened Bread, which God commanded them to remember, and that it might for ever be observed by them as if it were pendulous, or hanging before their eyes.

possibility of escape, and thus the Almighty prepared for a complete triumph over the Egyptian tyrant; for he had previously informed Moses, that Pharaoh would say, "They are entangled in the Wilderness;" and that he would harden Pharaoh's heart,\* that he should pursue them, and be destroyed. Which succeeded accordingly: for after the Egyptians had buried their dead first-born, Pharaoh being told that the Israelites were gone; and concluding from their long and speedy marches that they did fly indeed, repented that he had let them go: His clemency in dismissing the enslaved Israelites scarcely survives his deliverance from the angel's slaughtering hand, and rage and revenge succeed to his late fear and grief for the death of the first-born. He forgets the Almighty Power that, by a succession of plagues, had so lately afflicted him and his people, and regardless of the danger of provoking it again, blindly pursues his own destruction, instead of that of the Israelites.

With all the force that he could so suddenly raise, he put himself upon the pursuit, in order to reduce them to subjection again. He had with him six hundred chosen chariots,† and all the chariots of Egypt besides, that

\* *Harden Pharaoh's heart.* In the course of this history God is frequently said to harden Pharaoh's heart, by which we are to understand that God was pleased to withhold from him that grace, which had he seen fit to bestow, would have prevented, or corrected, the natural and contracted hardness of his heart; but he delivered him up, in a judicial manner, to the proud, perverse and wicked inclinations of his own mind; and this is what is called God's "giving persons over to a reprobate mind, &c. because they did not like to retain him in their knowledge." (Rom. i. 24—28.) "Is there then unrighteousness with God? God forbid." There is no unrighteousness in God's withholding the grace which he is under no obligation to give; nor in his delivering men up to the evil way of their own choosing; nor in his suffering Satan to blind and harden those who have voluntarily enlisted themselves into his service, and take pleasure in doing his will, in opposition to God. All the fault lies in the hardened sinner himself; and, so far as God is concerned in hardening, it is in such a *negative* manner, as is fully consistent with his holy character.

† *Chariots.* These are the first chariots of which we read, that were used in war; in which it was the custom long after for soldiers to fight. They

could be got ready at so short a warning, with their commanders, and horsemen;\* with which he pursued them, and on the sixth day after their departure out of Egypt, he came up with them and found them encamped by the sea; so that, as he had proposed to himself, he found the Israelites beset on all sides, the sea in front, huge mountains on their flank, and his own army in their rear. The sight of this army, and their old oppressor at the head of them, struck terror into the poor Israelites; who soon forgetting their newly-acquired liberty, betray a servile mind, and envy the slavish condition they but lately deplored. They reproach Moses as the author of all their imaginary woes, and wish to resume the yoke they had just shaken off: long custom had innured them to a state of slavery, and continual servitude of body had depressed their spirits. Moses, however, not resenting their reproachful taunts, but pitying their abject fear, cheers them with the assurance of God's protection and care: "The Lord (saith he) " will fight for you, and complete your deliverance; " and this numerous army of the Egyptians, which now " terrifies you, shall no more affright or molest you." Moses, before this encouraging assurance, had addressed himself to God, who admonished him no more at this juncture to apply himself to him, but to press the murmuring Israelites to move forward, giving him instructions how to secure his people, and afflict their enemies. The sacred rod, by which Moses had formerly wrought so many miracles, still retains its virtue, as inimitable by Egyptian magick as before, but now more fatally destructive. "Lift " up thy rod (said the Lord) and stretch thy hand over " the sea and divide it, and the children of Israel shall go

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were armed with scythes, and being drawn by horses against the enemy, they cut down all in their way; the men in them using darts and spears, and similar offensive weapons, to annoy the enemy.

\* *Horsemen.* Josephus writes, that besides these chariots, Pharaoh took with him fifty thousand horsemen and two hundred thousand footmen.



“ on dry land through\* the midst of the sea ; and I will  
 “ harden the hearts of the Egyptians, that they shall pur-  
 “ sue them, and there will I get me honour upon the ruin  
 “ of Pharaoh and his mighty army.”

And now to let the faint-hearted servile Israelites see, that they were Heaven’s peculiar care, the Angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel in the pillar of the cloud, removed and went behind them ; by which means it kept the two camps apart all night ; and the cloudy side being next the Egyptians, cast a darkness towards them ; but the fiery side, being next to the Israelites, gave them light.

Israel being thus secured from the terrifying sight of their enemies, Moses waves the sacred rod over the sea, and immediately a strong east wind blew, and drove the sea back from the land, and dividing the waters, made a dry and safe passage for the Israelites ; who, under the conduct of their great guide, enter the sandy plain, and with amazement behold the secret wonders of the deep : walled with the floods, they boldly march on, and instead of being terrified with the sight of a pursuing enemy, are entertained with the pleasing view of the ocean’s spoils, and the treasures of the divided main. The Egyptians, blind with fury and revenge, pursue the track, and not suspecting but that they, with their chariots and horsemen, might safely follow where the Israelites, being but footmen, went before, enter in after them to the midst of the sea. But when, in the morning watch, † the Lord had

\* *Through.* Some learned writers, both ancient and modern, have contended, that the Israelites did not directly cross the sea from shore to shore, but, taking a semi-circular compass, returned to the shore on the same side from which they entered ; and we admit that very plausible things have been said on this side of the question ; but, after all, we are fully of opinion that no account of this transaction is supportable, but that which supposes the Hebrews to have crossed the Red Sea from shore to shore, in a vast space of dry ground, which was left void by the retiring of the waters. It is supposed to have been at a place about 27 miles wide. The reader may see much on this subject in *Calmet’s Dictionary*, under the word SEA.

† *Watch.* This is reckoned to begin at the *third*, and reach to the *sixth* hour in the morning.



looked through the pillar of fire and cloud upon the Egyptians, and throwing their chariots off the wheels, had disordered their army, the Egyptians saw their error, and said one to another, "Let us fly from the face of Israel, for Jehovah fighteth for them against us." But it was now too late to fly; for Moses, at God's command, waving the sacred wand again, the sea returns to its strength. The fluid mountains on both sides take the signal, and at once uniting, cover the thirsty bottom, while horror and confusion invade the affrighted Egyptians: they hear and see the roaring waves break loose from their invisible chain, and with unavailing speed endeavour to avoid their relentless fury; but in vain: The mighty God of Jacob will avenge himself on the obstinate infidels, and their ruin shall be a lasting monument of his justice and vengeance.

Thus did the Lord rescue the Israelites from the king of Egypt and his mighty army; which being cast on the shore, was an awful yet delightful spectacle to the Israelites, and a confirmation of the power of their Almighty Deliverer, who had saved them from the inevitable ruin which the Egyptians proudly imagined awaited them. This created an awful reverence in them, not only for God himself, but also for his servant Moses, their guide, by whose hand God had wrought so many wonders for their preservation and safety.

Being now safely arrived on shore again, Moses and the Israelites, in grateful acknowledgment of their deliverance, sung a triumphant song;\* in which Miriam the prophetess, sister to Moses and Aaron, joined, taking a timbrel in her hand, and followed by the Israelitish women with timbrels and dances, answered the men, repeating alternately some parts of the song.

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\* *Song.* This song is recorded in Exod. xv. from v. 1. to 20. and which, in the Revelations, *cb.* xv. 3. has the honour to be joined to the song of the lamb.

*MOSES' SONG.*

The Lord's triumphant name let all rehearse,  
Praise the dread Maker of the Universe!

The horse, whom rich caparisons adorn,  
Proud riders by the generous coursers borne,  
At once have slept their everlasting sleep,  
At once lie buried in the Arabian deep.

Great God of War! We will thy works proclaim,  
Thy wond'rous works! Jehovah is thy name.  
Our Saviour thou, our strength, our song, our praise,  
Our father's God, thy glorious name we'll raise.  
For Thee a stately temple we'll prepare,  
Deep as the centre, tow'ring as the air.

Thus said the insulting foe——“ I will pursue,  
My sword, my thirsty sword in blood imbrue.”  
The winds of God blew terrible and loud,  
The sea the signal takes, and overwhelms the proud.  
Like stones, like lead they sink, they all expire  
Like stubble in thy wrath's consuming fire.  
The waters saw, thy voice the waters hear,  
Forget their nature, and congeal with fear.  
Convulsions form the sea to horrid caves,  
And shew a new abyss beneath the waves.

Great God of Israel! What vain idol dare  
With Thee th' Eternal Lord of Hosts compare?  
Thy glory shall thy ransom'd saints express,  
Obedient Nature doth thy power confess,  
And Thee with faces veil'd the dazzled angels bless. }

The song of thanksgiving and praise being finished, Moses led the children of Israel from the Red Sea into the desert of Shur or Etham, in which they marched three days without finding any water; which to so great a number of people, in so hot a country and season, must have been very irksome. But at length they came to a

place where there was water enough, but so bitter,\* that they could not drink of it. This disappointment enflamed their thirst, and increased their dissatisfaction : And though it was but three or four days since they so joyfully and thankfully praised God for their deliverance from the oppressions of the Egyptians, yet they murmured against Moses, asking him what they should drink? Moses was sensible of the calamity under which they laboured ; and fearing lest by their further murmurings they should provoke the Lord to punish them as they deserved, he immediately addresses himself to God in their behalf ; who no sooner hears the complaint, but redresses it, directing Moses to a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, they became sweet, and the people satisfied their thirst.

God having thus miraculously supplied their necessity, it might reasonably be supposed they had sufficient cause to depend upon his providence, and never more question his care of them ; but their faith scarcely survives his miracles. From Marah they marched to Elim, where they found better accommodations ; for there were twelve wells of water, and seventy palms, or date-trees. Here it may be supposed they made some stay ; for when they removed from hence, and came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, it was the fifteenth day of the second month, which was just a month from the day on which they set forward out of Egypt. And here again it was that the Israelites fell into a general mutiny against Moses and Aaron : The sight of a barren wilderness, and shortness of provisions, made them distrust God, and break out into very indecent expressions. “ Would  
“ to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land  
“ of Egypt, where we had plenty of bread and meat ; for  
“ now ye have brought us into this desert, where we must  
“ perish with famine.” This ungrateful treatment of his servants the Lord resented as done to himself, and of

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\* *Bitter.* From the bitterness of the waters, the place took the name of Marah, which signifies bitterness.

which Moses and Aaron made them sensible. “Your  
 “murmurings (said they) are not only against us, but  
 “against the Lord, who hath heard them, and ere long ye  
 “shall know that it was the Lord that brought you out of  
 “Egypt; whose arm is not shortened, but can make a  
 “provision for you as miraculous as your deliverance.”

The Lord therefore, to awe this murmuring people into a belief of his power and providence, having first shewed his glory in the cloud, promised them by Moses, that at even they should eat flesh, and in the morning be filled with bread; which he fulfilled, by causing quails to come up so thick in the evening, that they covered the camp, and afforded the Israelites flesh enough. And in the morning, when the dew was gone, there lay upon the ground a little white round substance, as small as the hoar frost, and like coriander-seed for shape: which, when the Israelites saw, they, wondering, said to each other, “What is this?”\*

\* *What.* The Septuagint translates the Hebrew thus—“The Israelites seeing this, said one to another, What is this? for they knew not what it was.” Exod. xvi. 15.—“They said מן דומה מן MAN-NU—*What is it?*” or, “it is a particular species—a peculiar thing, for they knew not what it (was).” Compare Exod. xvi. 31. with Deut. viii. 3. “Who fed thee with ארת-דומן *that peculiar thing*, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know.” Thus it should seem that the name *Manna* was derived from the expression of their surprise—*Man-nu—What is it?*

Dr. Anselm Bayly in a note on this passage in his English and Hebrew Bible, says—“[It is Manna] *Unde hoc?* Whence is this? The translators here “have formed the word *Manna* neither agreeably to the LXX, which in verse “31 says, “The house of Israel called it *Mav* ;” nor to the Points, according to “which in ver. 33 it is simply *Man* : Manna, if composed of the two words in the original, might be, *Man-ba*.”

Several authors of credit assure us that a kind of manna still falls in Arabia, Calabria, Poland and elsewhere. That in Arabia, is a kind of condensed honey, found in the summer on the leaves of trees and on the rocks and sand, similar to that described by Moses. However this may be, the constant supply of a sufficient quantity for more than a million of people, and its cessation on the Sabbath, shew that it was absolutely miraculous.

The manna sold as a medicine among us, is of a different nature. It is said to be collected in Calabria, and exudes, in a liquid form, from the stem and branches of trees. The common, or fat manna, is procured by incisions made in the trees after the spontaneous exudation is over. Some say the country people about Mount Libanus eat the manna found there, as others would eat honey.



for they knew not what it was. But God was pleased by Moses, to give them a direction in the gathering and use of it. First, it was to be gathered fresh every morning;\* all that was gathered was to be spent the same day. And when some of them, either out of curiosity or diffidence, that they might have a reserve, kept some of it till the next morning, it putrified and stank. They were to gather it by measure, according to the number of heads in every family. On the seventh day, which was the Sabbath, there was none to be found; therefore they were to gather a double portion on the sixth day, and lay it up for the seventh day; which being kept by God's appointment, and for that use, did not corrupt. This was to them instead of bread, and of this they did eat forty years, till they arrived on the borders of Canaan: And as a memorial of it, that future generations might see the bread with which he had fed their forefathers in the Wilderness, God appointed that an Omer† of this Manna should be preserved in a pot, and laid up before the Lord.

God having by his almighty power and secret wisdom thus plentifully provided for this murmuring people, to let them further see that they were under his more immediate care and protection, directs their marches from place to place, and orders their encampments. Accordingly they moved from the desert of Sin, and encamped in Rephidim,‡ where they had no water. Here again they fell into their old way of distrusting God's providence, which they well knew had never hitherto failed them; and forgetting the late miraculous sup-

\* *Every Morning.* This was to signify to the Israelites, that they should patiently depend upon God's providence from day to day; in which respect it might be a type of that *heavenly bread*, which Christ taught his disciples to pray for, Matt. vi. 11. "Give us this day our daily bread."

† *Omer.* This was the proportion daily allowed to one man, and is computed to contain of English measure three pints and a half, and a fifth part of a pint.

‡ *Rephidim.* Exod. xvii. 1. Moses does not here observe every place where the Israelites encamped, as he doth in Numb. xxxiii. but only those places where some remarkable thing was done.

plies, they reproach Moses for his ill conduct and neglect of them. Moses meekly rebukes them, and cautions them not to reflect on him, for in so doing they affronted the Lord. But thirst inflaming them, they regarded not his cautions, and grew more mutinous, charging him with a design of bringing them out of Egypt, to kill them with thirst. These complaints and reproaches deeply affected Moses, who immediately addressed himself to God for relief in this distress, expostulating with him thus: "What shall I do with this people? Thirst makes them impatient, and they are ready to stone me." Considering the many instances of God's providence, notwithstanding their present necessity, the Israelites had no reason to distrust: However, the Lord had compassion on Moses, and did also pity and bear with the people. "Give order to the people (said he) to march; and take thy rod, with which thou didst smite the river, and take the elders of the people with thee, and go thou on before; and behold, I will stand before thee upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt strike the rock, which shall yield water for the people to drink."\*

Moses did as God commanded, and in memory of the mutiny of the Israelites he named the place Massah and Meribah, which signify Temptation and Strife. But before the people could move from Rephidim, they were put upon another trial; for an army of the Amalekites† was at their heels, and ready to attack them. Moses thereupon ordered Joshua, a valiant young man who

\* It is proper to observe that St. Paul refers to this circumstance, and declares it to be a type or emblem of the Saviour, 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. "They did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink, (for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and *that rock was Christ*)"—that is, "it was a representation of Christ, the rock of ages, the sure foundation of his people's hopes, from whom they derive those streams of blessing, which follow them through this wilderness of mortal life, and will end in rivers of pleasure at the right-hand of God for ever." So Dr. Doddridge on the text.

† *Amalekites*. These were a people descended from Amalek, the grandson of Esau. See Gen. xxxvi. 12.

always attended him, to draw out a party of choice men against the next morning, and to give the Amalekites battle; and, said he, "I will stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in my hand." Joshua obeyed, and having drawn up his men, Moses, in the morning, while the two armies engaged, went up to the top of the hill, taking Aaron and Hur with him; and holding up the rod of God, as an ensign in his hand, Israel taking courage from thence, prevailed; but when through weariness he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. Therefore Aaron and Hur, observing that Moses' hands, through a continued waving of the rod, were grown feeble and weary, took a stone, and placed it under him, and standing on each side, held his hands up steadily till the going down of the sun; in which time Joshua routed the Amalekite army, and put them to the sword. This good success in their first martial enterprise, very much encouraged Joshua and the Israelites; and that so remarkable an action might be transmitted to posterity, God commanded it to be recorded in a book; and bade Moses rehearse it to Joshua the General, to animate him to future service; for, saith the Lord, "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." And for a memorial of this victory, Moses built an altar, to sacrifice thereon for it, and called it Jehovah Nissi;\* because, said he, the Lord hath sworn that he will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

By this time the Israelites were come near the place where God first appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and not far from his father-in-law Jethro's habitation; who having heard of all that God had done for Moses and his people Israel, and understanding they were now near him, took his daughter Zipporah, Moses' wife, with their two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, and brought them to him to the Israelitish camp: where, after mutual salutations and embracings, Moses gave Jethro a particular account

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\* *Jehovah Nissi.* That is, The Lord is my banner, as he declared by holding up his rod and his hands.

of the Lord's dealing with Pharaoh and the Egyptians in defence of Israel, and of all that had befallen them during their march thither. Jethro, being a devout\* man, testified his joy by rendering solemn praise to God, and acknowledging his sovereignty, offering at the same time a burnt offering and sacrifices of thanksgiving to God ; in which Aaron and all the elders of Israel joined with him, and feasted together.

During Jethro's stay in the camp, he observed the great weight of business under which Moses laboured, in hearing the complaints, and determining the differences, of so great a people ; and therefore, being a wise and experienced prince himself, he advised his son-in-law to substitute certain subordinate officers, properly qualified, men of sincerity and ability, such as feared God and hated covetousness, to be rulers ; some over thousands, some over hundreds, some over fifties, and some over tens ; who should hear and determine all smaller matters among the people, and refer the greater and more weighty causes only to him : assuring him, that if with God's approbation he followed this advice, it would be better both for the people and himself. Moses approves of this counsel, and immediately puts it in practice, to the great ease of himself and the people. Jethro seeing things thus settled, takes his leave of his son-in-law, and returns to his own land.

Three months† after God had delivered his people from the tyranny of the king of Egypt, they left Rephidim and encamped in the Wilderness of Sinai before the Mount of God. Here God called for Moses, who going up to it, received a command to remind the Israelites, that they ought to consider the tender love of God to them, which had so eminently and frequently appeared in their deli-

\* *Devout.* Jethro being descended from Abraham by Keturah his second wife, though not of the seed of promise, it is evident that he worshipped the true God ; and therefore Moses refused not to marry his daughter.

† *Months.* This was in the beginning of the month Sinan, containing part of May and June.



verance and preservation ; and that though they had murmured and distrusted his providence, yet if now they would be obedient and keep his covenant, he would take them into his protection, and that they should be his people, a priestly kingdom, and a holy nation. Moses having communicated this to the elders and people, they unanimously answered, that whatsoever the Lord had commanded them, they would obediently perform. Moses returned the answer of the people to God, who said to him, “ I will come to you in the darkness of a cloud, that “ the people may see something of me, when I shall speak “ to you, and may always believe you.” Then he commanded him to direct the people to cleanse themselves, and to wash their garments during two days, and to be ready on the third day, when the Lord would descend,\* in the sight of all the people, on Mount Sinai ; that he should mark out bounds about the mountain, which none was to pass before the trumpet began to sound. These were the preparatory solemnities† to the Lord’s giving the Law ;‡ after which followed divers judicial laws, together with some ceremonials, and backed with promises of blessings upon the people’s obedience.

All which Moses wrote in a book, and then read it to the people ; and, by God’s command, brought up Aaron with his two sons, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, so near that they saw the Divine Majesty, yet they were not smitten by it, but survived the sight. This was some wonderful representation

\* *Descend.* It must be observed here, and likewise in other places of the same nature, that the Scripture, suiting itself to man’s common way of speaking and thinking, assigns such things to God, as are only proper to the effects. It is said that God descended on the mountain, because he made his presence more visible there by sensible and surprizing effects. It may be also said, it was an Angel descended from God, who spoke to Moses, and gave the Law ; but the text expresses, Exod. xix. 20. that it was God himself, who descended upon the top of Mount Sinai.

† *Solemnities.* See Exod. from *cb.* xix. to xxiv.

‡ *Law.* Which contained the Ten Commandments, from thence called the *Decalogue.*

of God, (perhaps intended to denote the future incarnation of the Redeemer) and they were permitted to eat and drink in his presence.

The next time Moses went up to the mountain, which\* was likewise then at the command of God, he took with him none but Joshua, directing the elders to tarry for them till they should return, and referring them to Aaron and Hur, for assistance and advice, in any difficult case that might be brought before them. Moses had no sooner ascended the Mountain of God than a cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord abode upon it like a devouring fire, in the sight of the children of Israel. The seventh day, God called Moses from the midst of the fire, and he entered the midst of the cloud, and went further up the mount, and remained there forty days and as many nights, without any bodily nourishment. During which time he received the tables of stone, wherein God himself had written the Law; which was a token of its peculiar excellency, and designed to be a standing proof to the people that they were under the immediate government of God. Moses was also instructed at the same time, how the tabernacle, in which he was to be worshipped, should be constructed. He likewise described the Sanctuary, the Table for the Shew Bread, the Altar of Frankincense, the Altar for the Burnt-offerings, the Court of the Tabernacle, the Laver to wash in, the Ark, the Candlestick, the Priestly Vestments, and taught him how the priests were to be consecrated, what part of the offering they were to take, and how the perpetual sacrifice was to be offered. God likewise pitched upon the very men to undertake the building, Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah, and Aholiah of the tribe of Dan. In fine, he recommended the keeping of the Sabbath, and having ended the discourse,† gave Moses two tables of

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\* *Which.* See Exod. xxiv. 12.

† *Discourse.* See the particulars from the twenty-third to the thirty-second chapter of Exodus.

stone, containing his Covenant or Law, which were written by the hand of God.

While Moses was conversing with God on the Mount, and Joshua dutifully waiting his return, the people in the camp, becoming impatient of his long absence, tumultuously repair to Aaron, and, as if they despaired of God's protection, because he did not continually work miracles to convince them, they concluded that Moses had deserted them; and therefore required Aaron to make them gods to go before them. Aaron, who should have restrained them from this madness, too easily complied, and neglecting to reprove and expostulate with them on the unreasonableness of their wild desire, contributed to their idolatry: and, as if inclined to promote their wicked inclination, he ordered them to break off the golden rings,\* which were in the ears of their wives and children, and bring them to him. Which, when he had received, he tied in a bag, and made a molten calf † of them. Which

\* *Rings.* These probably were the same, which they had borrowed of the Egyptians, Exod. xii. 35.

† *Calf.* The reason why they worshipped God rather in the similitude of a calf, than of any other creature, is generally conceived to be from the corruptions they had learned among the Egyptians, (who worshipped their idol Apis or Serapis in a living ox, and likewise in an image made in the form and similitude of an ox, with a bushel on his head) in memory, as some say, of Pharaoh's dreams, and Joseph's providence, who measured out the corn to the people in that extreme dearth. Concerning the sin of the Israelites in making this calf or ox, the modern Jews transfer the fault upon certain proselyte Egyptians, who came out with them; and they say, that when Aaron cast their jewels into the fire, those Egyptians, contrary to his expectation, by their magick art produced a calf, to which purpose they urge Aaron's own words, Ex. xxxii. 24. "I did cast the gold into the fire, and thereof came this calf;" as if his art or will went not with the making thereof, but that of itself it made itself. Which answer of his, rather shews how vain the wit of man is in the excuse of sin.

Some think that the people, by worshipping God under the figure of a *Calf* or *Ox* only, and not according to the Cherubic figures, which included in each compound image, the heads of an Ox, a Lion and an Eagle, (and which probably were formed at a very early period, long before the time of Moses) and signified the Triune Jehovah, or God in Covenant to redeem man, intended to worship God

being done, they acknowledged it for their God, saying, "This is thy God, O Israel, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt." Aaron seeing the people so much delighted with their golden God, as if he were possessed with the same idolatrous spirit, built an altar before it, and proclaimed a feast to be holden the next day to the Lord. And indeed, the people did make a revelling feast of it; for after they had made their oblations and peace-offerings, they sat down to eat and drink, and spent the whole day in feasting and pleasure.

Moses was still in the Mount conversing with God, while the wanton Israelites were revelling in the camp, little suspecting such a sudden change in a people who had so lately and solemnly entered into a covenant of obedience to all that God should command. But He, from whom no secret can be hid, is instantly apprised of this sudden revolt; therefore informing Moses what crime the people had committed, he expresses his indignation against their rebellion and ingratitude. "Go down (said he) for thy\* people whom thou broughtest out of Egypt have corrupted themselves. I know them to be an obstinate people in many instances, therefore intercede not for them, but see me express my resentment in their destruction; and to thee will I transfer the blessings I intended for them, and of thee will I make a great nation." But notwithstanding their frequent rebellions against God, and tumultuous mutinies against himself, Moses is so far from seeking his own interest by their destruction, that he interposes with his prayers; and with his importunate intreaties so appeased the Lord, that he desisted from their destruction.

in one Person only. If so, their sin was that of the Unitarians, as they call themselves, who reject the Persons of the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who, together with the Father, are to be worshipped as God over all, blessed for ever.

\* *Thy*, &c. By this expression it seems as if God disowned them any more to be his people, and would cast them off.



Moses having deprecated the anger of God, hastened down from the mount, and took Joshua with him, who had, during his stay above, waited for him below. As they went, Joshua, hearing the noise of the people shouting, observed to Moses, that there was a noise of war in the camp. But Moses, who knew the truth of it before, replied, That the noise was not like that of those which shouted for victory, nor of those that cried for quarter, but of such as rejoiced. Being come within sight of the camp, Moses beheld the calf, and the people dancing before it; which so incensed him, that in a holy rage at their ingratitude and rebellion, he threw the tables wherein God had with his own hand written the Law, against the rock, and brake them to pieces: Then taking the idol calf to deface it, he first threy it into the fire and burnt it, and grinding it to powder, he took the powder and strewed it upon the water; and to make the Israelites more sensible of their folly in worshipping that as a God, which should pass through their bodies, he obliged them to drink of the water.\*

After this, Moses calls Aaron to account, for having given way to this sin of the people; which Aaron very poorly excuses by urging their mischievous temper,

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\* This fact is a topic of ridicule, and has served as a butt for the envenomed though harmless shafts of Voltaire. It appeared to him impossible in itself; incredible in its circumstances; and full of injustice and barbarity in its consequences. He therefore concluded the whole story was an inturpotation. But Voltaire was no Chemist. Stahl, who was a Christian, and a Chemist of the first order, did not argue like the great arch infidel.—Instead of asserting the impossibility of reducing gold to a powder soluble in water, he proved the contrary, by well known experiments, and by means the most simple put the relation of Moses beyond a doubt.—*Salt of tartar combined with sulphur*, reduces gold to a powder that may be swallowed; and it is well known, that *natron*, which abounds on the shores of the Nile, produces the same effect.—The experiment is easily made.—Compare this with the knowledge displayed by the Israelites in working in metals, *Exod. ch. xxv. xxv. and xxvii*; the acquaintance which the ancient Egyptians had with chemistry manifested in their paintings on their mummies; and what St. Stephen says of Moses (*Acts ch. vii. v. 22.*) “He was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.”

and that he had complied with them for the sake of peace. Moses did not long reason the case with Aaron; for seeing that the people, by Aaron's indiscretion, were naked and stripped of the defence and protection which God's presence and favour had given to them, and that too amongst their enemies; and to make a further atonement for this sin, besides that of burning the calf, he went into the midst of the camp, and calling out, said, "Let those who are for the Lord, join themselves with me." Upon which all the sons of Levi, who were not concerned in the late idolatry, repaired to him, whom he ordered to arm, and go through the camp, and slay all the ring-leaders of the sedition, with their followers. The Levites, thus commissioned, fell on; and slew about three thousand men. For which laudable zeal and ready obedience, Moses blessed\* the family of Levi, assuring them that by this shedding the blood of their idolatrous brethren without favour or distinction, they had consecrated themselves to the Lord, who would not fail to bless them for it.

And now, though God was pleased to accept this execution in part of satisfaction for the present, yet he would not discharge the people, but threatened them, that in the day when he should visit, he would punish them for this sin. And he did afterwards, upon fresh provocations, remember it, and added to their punishment. After this, Moses returning to the Lord, acknowledged Israel's sin, and asked forgiveness for it with such earnestness and concern, that he intreated God to blot him out of his book,† rather than not to pardon them. But this

\* *Blessed.* This fact so pleased God, Exod. xxxii. 27, that he turned the curse of Jacob against Levi, Gen. xlix. 7. into a blessing. See Deut. xxxiii. 9.

† *Book.* Exod. xxxii. 32. It is said, that God being greatly offended with the Israelites for their idolatry resolved straightway to consume them. Moses intercedes for them and prays, that God would pardon them, or blot him out of his book. But what could be intended by this book, but the scroll, wherein all the names of the Israelites that were to enter into the Land of Canaan were written? This way of speaking is evidently grounded upon the numbering of the children of Israel at their coming out of Egypt, and the registering of their names in a scroll or regis-

was inconsistent with the divine justice, and therefore God gave him this short answer, "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my Book."

God being thus appeased, commanded Moses to lead the people to the place he had appointed; but at the same time let him know, he was not willing to go with them, because they were a stiff-necked people, lest they should provoke him to consume them in the way; yet, to shew he had still some tenderness and regard for them, he would send his Angel before them, to drive out the inhabitants of the promised land, that so he might perform the oath, which he had sworn to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This was very afflicting news to the Israelites, who now plainly perceived, that God's withdrawing his immediate presence from them was the effect of their rebellion; upon which they mourned, and to shew their humiliation, they forebore to put on their ornaments. But Moses, to humble them the more, and make them more sensible of their sin, took a tent, and pitching it without the camp, at a considerable distance, called it the "tabernacle of the congregation:"\* intimating to them

ter, as may be seen Numb. i. The same method was likewise taken at the return from the Babylonish captivity, as may be seen in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah; and those, who were enrolled in this book, are said, "to be written for Life, or among the living." Isa. iv. 3. for every year they blotted out of this catalogue the names of those who died. From hence we find in Scripture frequent mention made of "the Book of Life," and of "the Lamb's Book of life," and of "a Name written in Heaven." By the book of life from which Moses desired his name to be erased, we cannot possibly suppose that book in which the names of God's elect are written, as ordained to eternal life. Moses could never have entertained a desire to be excluded from the glory of the heavenly world, but he might be content, for the sake of his numerous people, to be excluded from the promised land, or immediately to die, and be no more seen in the present world. See also Numb. xi. 15.

\* *Congregation.* It is the opinion of some that this tent, or tabernacle, was the ancient one, preserved from the earliest period, resembling in some degree, that which Moses was ordered to make, and in which God had been worshipped time immemorial, by the Patriarchs, &c.

by this, that the Lord was so highly offended with them for their idolatry, that he had removed from them and would no longer dwell among them as he had done before : in consequence of which, every one who sought the Lord, was obliged to go to this tabernacle without the camp ; and when Moses went into it, as he entered in, the cloudy pillar, in which the Lord used to appear, descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle.

The people being thus humbled, were more careful in observing the motions of Moses ; and therefore when he went out of the camp to the tabernacle, they rose up and stood every man at his tent door, looking after him, till he had entered it : and when they saw the cloudy pillar, which they knew was a token of God's presence, they all worshipped. Here the Lord talked with Moses, and permitted Moses to talk\* with him in the most familiar manner ; which favour Moses improved to the advantage of the people ; labouring with much importunity to reconcile God to them. After which, the Lord, having, at Moses' request, and to encourage and comfort him, shewn him as much of his glory, as Moses was capable of sustaining, he ordered him to prepare two new tables of stone, † like the former, which he had broken, and come

\* *Talk.* Moses' talking familiarly with God is accommodated to man's capacity, which is expressed Exod. xxxiii. 11, to be *face to face*, as a man speaketh to his friend.

† *Tables of Stone.* Authors vary much in their opinions concerning the inventors of letters. Some say, Cadmus brought the use of them into Greece ; others say, Palamedes. Some say Radamanthus brought them into Assyria : Memnon into Egypt : Hercules into Phrygia, and Carmenta into Latium. Likewise some say the Phoenicians had the first knowledge of them ; others, the Ethiopians, and others the Assyrians. But upon better grounds it is thought by Eusebius in his *Prepar. Evang. l. 18*, that Moses first taught the use of letters to the Jews, and that the Phoenicians learned them from the Jews, and the Grecians from the Phoenicians. The matter upon which men wrote in ruder times was various : Some wrote on rinds of trees ; some on tiles ; some on tables, which last was chiefly in use among the Jews. The Decalogue was written on two tables of stone. And in Isaiah's time they used tables. *cb. iii. v. 8.* The Septuagint say, *ib.* on a box-



up himself alone with them in the morning to Mount Sinai, “and I (said he) will write in those tables the “ words that were in the first.”

Moses accordingly rose up early in the morning and repaired to Mount Sinai with the two tables, where prostrating himself before the Divine Majesty, who appeared in the cloud on the top of the mount, he most humbly entreated him to pardon the sin of his people. The Lord favourably received his intercession, and promised to make a covenant with his people\* upon condition they would keep his commandments; that they would not worship the gods of the Canaanites; that they would make no alliances with the people of that country; that they would have no strange gods; that they would keep the Sabbath, the Passover, and other Festivals ordained by the law. †

Moses having continued in the Mount forty days and forty nights, in communion with God, without meat and drink, returned to the people with the two tables of the law: But he was not conscious that, in consequence of his conference with God, his face had contracted an

table; as if the writing-tables were made of box-trees. They used not pens or quills, but a certain instrument or punch made of iron or steel, called *Stylus*, which was sharp at one end, for the more convenient indenting or carving the characters; and broad at the other, for scraping out. As to the custom of writing on stone or brick, it was undoubtedly very ancient. *Josephus Antiq. l. 11.* says, That Seth, having been instructed by Adam in Astronomy; and understanding that the world was twice to perish, once by a deluge, afterwards by a general conflagration, reduced this art to an epitome, and inscribed it on two pillars, one of brick, against the violence of fire; the other of stone against the inundation of water; one of which (the pillar of stone) he affirms to have been extant in his time, in a place called Syrias or Seirath, conceived by Vossius *lib. deestate Mundi, p. 271*, to be the land bordering on Mount Ephraim, not far from Jericho.

\* *His People.* Exod. xxxiv. 10. God here calls the children of Israel, *Thy People*, that is, the people of Moses, for he would not yet call them his.

† *Law.* See Exod. xxxiv. from v. 10. to v. 27.

unusual splendor.\* Wherefore Aaron and the Israelites being affrighted at the lustre of his countenance, durst not approach him; which Moses perceiving, he put a veil upon his face, and then calling the rulers and all the people to him, he gave them in command all that the Lord had charged him with in the Mount: and from that time, so long as the lustre continued upon his face, when he talked with the people, he put on the veil; but when he went in to speak to the Lord, he put it off.

At this time Moses acquainted the people, that it was the Lord's will to have a Tabernacle erected, and that he had commanded him to speak to them to bring in their offerings, which were to consist of materials with which it was to be made. The directions now given were the same with those when Moses went first up to the Mount; but, by reason of the people's transgression in idolizing the calf, they were not then delivered to them. This offering was not to be exacted, but the people were to give it voluntarily; to which God so inclined them, that they soon brought in more than was requisite, so that Moses was obliged to cause proclamation to be made to restrain their liberality.

\* *Splendor.* The Vulgate Latin renders Moses' face *Cornuta*, or *horned*; from whence, it is probable, of old he was pictured with horns on his head. But the LXX. render it much better, *glorified*, to which the Apostle 2 Cor. iii. 7. alludes. No doubt, by this divine conversation Moses' face was illumined, and we may reasonably suppose that the rays of this divine light might terminate in points not unlike the taper end of a horn. And this glorious appearance in Moses' face might be designed for several reasons. As, 1. That the people might pay him the greater reverence and fear. 2 To testify God's great love and esteem for him. 3. To terrify the Israelites from violating the Law. And these beams or rays of light, St. Ambrose on Psal. cxviii. says, continued to Moses all the rest of his life.

St. Paul comments at large on the veil of Moses. (2 Cor. 3.) and considers it as descriptive of the dispensation of the law, in which the blessings of the gospel are but obscurely seen, concealed in types and shadows, so that they could not distinctly see them. We ought to rejoice, as Christians, that under the Gospel the veil is removed, and "with open face, we behold as in a glass, the glory of the Lord." Let it be our concern to be thereby transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, that others may behold "the beauty of holiness" in our life and conversation.

The materials, thus prepared, were delivered to Bezaleel and Aholiah, two ingenious men, and well skilled in architecture and all manner of workmanship, who employed all the men and women, who had skill in curious operations. This Tabernacle was a tent covered with curtains and skins, but much larger than ordinary tents. It was divided into two parts; the one covered, and properly called the Tabernacle; and the other open, called the Court. The covered part was again divided into two other parts; the one called the Holy of Holies, the curtains of which were made of embroidered linen of various colours. There were ten curtains, twenty eight cubits\* long, and four in breadth. Five curtains together made two coverings, which being united together covered the whole tabernacle. Over the rest there were two other coverings, the one of goats' hair, the other of sheep skins; and above these a covering of badgers' skins dyed red. These veils or coverings were laid on a square frame of planks, resting on bases. There were forty-eight large planks, each a cubit and an half wide, and ten cubits high, twenty of them on each side, and six at one end to the westward, and one at each corner: each plank was borne on two silver bases; they were let into one another, and held by bars running the length of the planks. The east end was open, and only covered with a curtain. The Holy of Holies was separated from the rest of the tabernacle by a curtain fastened to four pillars standing ten cubits from the end. The whole length of the Tabernacle was thirty two cubits, and the breadth twelve. The end was thirty cubits high, the upper curtain hung on the north and south sides eight cubits, and on the east and west four cubits.

The Court was a spot of ground an hundred cubits long, and fifty in breadth, enclosed by twenty columns, each of them twenty cubits high, and ten in breadth, covered with silver, and standing on copper bases five cubits distant from each other, between which there were cur-

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\* *Cubits.* A cubit is supposed to be about half a yard of our measure. The sacred cubit used in after times is said to have been equal to a yard.

tains drawn and fastened with hooks. At the east end was an entrance twenty cubits wide, covered with a curtain hanging loose.

The Ark which was placed in the Holy of Holies, was a square chest made of Shittim-wood, two cubits and a half long, and one cubit and a half wide and deep. It was covered with gold plates, and had a gold cornice which bore the lid. On the sides of it were rings, through which the poles were passed, by which it was to be carried. The covering was all of gold, and called the Propitiatory or Mercy seat. There were two Cherubims on it, which covered it with their wings; the tables of the Law were in the Ark, which was therefore called the Ark of the Testimony, or of the Covenant.

The Table was made of cedar covered with gold, two cubits long, one in breadth, and one and a half in height. About the edge of it was an ornament; it stood on four feet, and had wooden bars plated with gold to carry it by. They laid on it the Offering or Shew-bread, which was changed every week; six loaves at each end, with incense over them. It was not lawful for any but the priests to eat of that bread.

The Candlestick, which was of pure gold, had seven branches, three on each side, and one in the middle: each branch had three knobs like apples, and three sockets in the shape of half almond-shells; that in the middle had four; on each branch was a golden lamp, and there were golden snuffers and nippers to dress them.

There were two Altars, one for the Burnt-offerings, five cubits long and wide, and three in height, with a kind of horn at each corner. It was hollow, covered both within and without with brass plates, and open both at top and at bottom. In the midst of it was a copper grate, standing on four feet, a cubit and a half high, and fastened with hooks and rings. On it were burned the wood and the offerings. There were all necessaries for that service, as kettles, ladles, tongs, hooks, &c.

The Altar of the Incense was but one cubit in length and breadth, and two cubits high. It was plated with gold, and had a crown of gold over it. This altar was in the sanctuary; that of the burnt-offering was in the court



of the tabernacle ; in which also was a laver, or large copper bason, furnished with several cocks, by which the water was drawn, to wash the hands of the priests when they ministered.

The Vestments of the High-priest were the Breast-plate, the Ephod, the Robe, the Close Coat, the Mitre and the Girdle. The Ephod, the Robe, and the Close Coat were of linen, and covered the whole body from the neck to the heels. Over all was a purple Tunick, a vestment larger and finer wrought, which reached not so low ; but at the bottom of it were pomegranates of needle-work, and golden bells. The Ephod consisted of two bands made of gold thread, and of several colours, made fast to a sort of collar, which hung down before and behind on both shoulders, and meeting, served for a girdle to the Tunick or vestment. On the shoulders were two large precious stones, which joined the fore and hind parts of the Ephod, on which were engraven the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, six on each of them. The Breast-plate being of the same workmanship, but double, was attached with gold chains to the Ephod. It was a square ornament, very thick, and covering the breast. The Girdle was the Ephod itself crossed, or some other band of the same matter. The Mitre, or Turban, was of fine linen ; it covered the head, and on the forehead was a gold plate, on which were engraven these words, *THE HOLINESS OF THE LORD.*\* These were the solemn ornaments belonging to the high-priest ; the others wore only a simple Tunick or Vestment, a linen Mitre and a Girdle. They had all Breeches of linen and cotton, covering their legs and thighs, and reaching up to the waist.†

The work being finished, and the vestments made according to these directions, they were brought to

\* Or, *Holiness to the Lord.*

† These garments are said to have been “ for Glory and for Beauty,” they were not merely ornaments to adorn the wearer, but typical, like the rest of the ritual, of Jesus Christ, “ The Holy One of God,” the “ High Priest of our Profession.”

Moses for his approbation, who having viewed them, and found that all was done as the Lord had commanded, he praised God for the people's diligence, and prayed for them. And now all things being ready, on the first day of the first month, in the second year after their departure from Egypt, the Tabernacle was by God's immediate command set up; and all its furniture disposed in the proper places. Which done, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord filled it; so that for a while Moses himself was not able to enter in. And this cloud was the signal to the people of Israel, by which they knew when to march, and when to rest. For when the cloud was taken up from over the Tabernacle, the children of Israel journeyed: but if the cloud was not taken up, they continued in the same place.

The Tabernacle being erected, and all things prepared, God proceeded to give direction to Moses, and by him to the people, in what manner his public worship, under that dispensation, should be performed; which was by sacrifice: and this was an offering made to God, chiefly for the expiation of sin: for "without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins," and the Jewish offerings prefigured the "one sacrifice" of the Son of God, whereby he was "to take away the sin of the world." Only five sorts of creatures were appointed to be offered in sacrifice; which were oxen, lambs, goats, turtle-doves and young pigeons, ~~all which~~ <sup>g'mal</sup> were to be males, and without blemish. He who presented an offering, did it at the altar, and laid both his hands on the head of the creature, and then the throat of it was cut within the court of the tabernacle. The blood was received in a bason, and with it the priest sprinkled the vessels, and corners of the altar; the rest was spilt at the foot of the altar. The victim was flead, cut in pieces, and laid on the altar, where either the whole, or part of it was burnt, according to the several sorts of sacrifices. Libations likewise were added to the sacrifices: all the wine, or flour, which were offered with the victim, were called Effusion, or pouring out. There was a separate offering of fine flour and oil, baked on an iron, or in a pan. These

were sprinkled with oil, and frankincense added to them.

The sacrifices were of four sorts: 1. The Burnt-offering, every part of which was consumed by fire on the altar, after washing the feet and entrails. 2. The Peace-offering, of which only the inward fat was burnt on the altar, made up with the liver and kidneys, and the tails of the lambs. The breast and the right shoulder belonged to the priests, who were obliged to eat them in the holy place; the rest belonged to him who offered the sacrifice. 3. The Sacrifice for Sin, committed either wilfully or ignorantly; and in this the priest took some of the blood of the victim, dipped his finger in it, and sprinkled seven times towards the veil of the sanctuary. The same parts of the victim were burnt on the altar in this as in the former sacrifice; the rest, if the sacrifice were offered for the sin of the high-priest, or for the people, was carried without the camp to be burnt there, with the skin, the head, the feet and the bowels: if it were for a private person, the victim was divided, as was before observed, between the priest and the offerer. 4. The Sacrifice of Oblation was either fine flour, or incense, or cakes of fine flour and oil baked, or the first fruits of new corn: with the things offered, there were always oil, salt, wine and frankincense. All the frankincense was cast into the fire; but of the other things offered, the priest took one part, which he also burnt, and the rest belonged to him.

The next thing that regarded the worship of the Israelites was their Festivals. The first of which was their Sabbath, which they kept very strictly, dedicating it wholly to rest, not doing the least servile work on that day. It began like all other festivals on one evening, and ended the next. The Passover was likewise a very solemn festival. It began on the evening of the fourteenth day of the March moon. They ate none but unleavened bread for seven days, and the seventh day was another great festival. The first day after the passover they offered new ears of corn, and from that day they reckoned seven full weeks or fifty days; and that fiftieth day was another solemn festival, called the Harvest fes-

tival; when they offered in thanksgiving, two loaves of new wheat, as the first fruits of the harvest.

The First day of the Seventh month, which was the first of the civil year, published by sound of trumpet, was also a festival. On the tenth of the same month was kept the Fast of expiation, and that was the day on which the priests went into the sanctuary. They offered two goats, one of which was a solemn sacrifice for sin. The high priest took the blood of this and of the lamb killed in the sanctuary, and sprinkled them; the other goat was carried not only out of the tabernacle, but without the camp also, and was therefore called *Azazel*, or the scape-goat. On the fifteenth of the same month began the feast of tabernacles, which lasted eight days, being kept as a memorial that the children of Israel had lived in tents. During this feast they lived in huts covered with boughs of trees, and spent those days in mirth, holding boughs in their hands, with which they went round the altar. Every seventh year was dedicated to rest, for in them they neither sowed nor reaped; but the fiftieth year, called the *Jubilee*, was most solemn, for then all estates which had been alienated, returned to those who had sold them, and slaves recovered their liberty.\*

The Israelites, in their food, distinguished between two sorts of creatures, clean and unclean; it was lawful for them to eat of the first, but not of the last. There were two qualifications required for a beast to be clean; which were, that it should have a cloven hoof, and that it should chew the cud: so that it was unlawful for them to eat the flesh of swine, because they do not chew the cud; or rabbits and hares because they have not cloven feet, like the ox, the stag, the sheep, but toes joined by skins. Among fishes they were only allowed to eat such as had fins and scales. All birds of prey were forbidden,

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\* *Liberty.* In allusion to this it is said, Ps. 89. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound." The privileges announced by the Jubilee trumpet were typical of the superior blessings of the Gospel, which is indeed a joyful sound—"glad tidings of great joy."



and it was unlawful for them to eat blood, or the flesh of beasts strangled.

Of uncleanness there were many sorts among the Israelites: not only they who had eaten of unclean beasts were reckoned unclean, but also those who touched their carcases. Leprosy was reckoned the greatest uncleanness; of the nature and quality of which the priest was to judge, and to separate the lepers from the rest of the people as he thought fit. There was also a leprosy which adhered to clothes, and walls, and garments; after which the moveables, and the houses became unclean. A woman was deemed unclean after her lying-in, for forty days if she had a son, and for sixty days if she had a daughter. Of these uncleannesses, some sorts were cleansed by washing their garments and bodies; and others, at the last, by offering sacrifice to cleanse them.

The laws relating to matrimony were these: They were forbidden to marry strange women. The persons among whom it was not allowed to contract matrimony were the father, the mother, the mother-in-law, the sister by the father or mother's side, the son's or daughter's daughter, the father's wife's daughter, the father or mother's sister, the uncle, the daughter-in-law, the brother's wife, the wife's sister and daughter, or grandson or granddaughter. However, it was not only lawful, but enjoined, that the brother should marry the brother's widow, if he died without issue. Adultery and other sins of impurity were severely forbidden by the law. In short, there was a ceremony to try whether women were guilty of adultery. But besides the moral precepts contained in the decalogue, and more particularly explained in the books of Moses, that holy legislator, by God's direction, gave them laws for the government of their commonwealth, which were agreeable to reason and equity.

After some of these directions for the worship of God, Moses, by the express command of God, appointed Aaron High-priest, and his sons and their offspring, to be the priestly race. And when they were sanctified, Moses enrobed them, anointed their heads with oil, and directed them to offer sacrifice for sin. The function of the

priests in general was to offer sacrifice to the Lord, only the high-priest's was peculiar; for he only was allowed to go once a year into the Holy of Holies on the day of expiation, clad in his priestly garments, to burn incense there before the ark, and sprinkle the blood of the offering seven times with his finger. To the priests were united all the tribe of Levi to serve in the tabernacle; to both which were appointed particular allowances for their subsistence. But if any of the priestly race, or of the tribe of Levi, had any bodily imperfections, they were excluded from the function, but still enjoyed the right and privileges of their birth. The obligations they lay under were these: They were to drink no wine or intoxicating liquors when they were to officiate in the Tabernacle; they were not to marry a woman that was divorced, or had been prostituted; they were not to be at funerals, unless they were of their own fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, and maiden sisters. But now let us return to the history.

Eight days after the consecration of Aaron and his sons, Aaron offered his first burnt-offering for himself and the people. This was so acceptable to God, that he gave a miraculous testimony of his approbation, by sending down fire upon the altar, which consumed\* the offering in the sight of the people, who in loud shouts and acclamations expressed their joy, for God's so signally owning their offering, and in reverence they prostrated themselves to the ground.

The fire, thus miraculously kindled, ought to have been kept continually burning; for so the Lord had expressly commanded.† But Nadab and Abihu, two unhappy sons

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\* *Consumed.* This was always esteemed the highest mark of divine approbation, as Ps. xx. 3. "The Lord remember all thy offerings, and accept (*reduce to ashes*) thy burnt-sacrifice." It was thus at the dedication of the temple of Solomon; and in this manner probably the offering of Abel was distinguished from that of Cain.

† *Commanded.* See Levit. vi. 12, 13. Tradition says that this fire which came from heaven (Levit. ix. 24.) and consumed the first burnt-offering, was preserved till the captivity in Babylon.

of Aaron, forgetful of their duty, took their censers and putting common\* fire into them, laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire† before the Lord. This profane approach, the affronted Majesty of heaven instantly re- sents; for a suffocating flame darted through them, and without destroying their bodies or garments, killed them. Moses taking occasion from this sudden and terrible judgment to deter the rest of the priests from committing a similar crime, ordered them to bring the dead bodies of Nadab and Abihu from before the sanctuary, and carry them out of the camp in the same condition they found them. He likewise charged Aaron and his sons not to mourn for Nadab and Abihu, by shaving their heads, or rending their clothes; but that they should leave those marks of mourning to the rest of the people, from whom they ought to distinguish themselves in this, as well as in other points, in reverence to that holy anointing whereby they had been consecrated to the Lord, and separated from the rest of their brethren. A good instruction and warning to others, to guard against murmuring or extreme sorrowing when the hand of God visits them in judgment.

\* *Common.* There were two sorts of fire used in the tabernacle; the Holy Fire which came from heaven, and was that which God had commanded to be kept always burning for the use of the altar of Burnt-Offering; and the Common fire, which was used to boil the flesh of the Peace-Offering and Sacrifice for Sin.

† *Strange Fire.* Whether these sons of Aaron had too far indulged themselves in the use of wine, or other strong liquors, which might have made them forgetful of their duty, doth not plainly appear from the text, Levit. x. 1. Yet some Jewish doctors affirm it; and from the context, *Ib.* v. 9. there is some reason to suspect it, because as soon as they were carried out, God charged Aaron and his sons, on pain of death, "Not to drink wine or strong drink," when they were to go into the tabernacle of the congregation, telling them, "It shall be a statute to them throughout all generations." And he assigns there the reasons of this strict prohibition, "That ye may put a difference between the holy and unholy, and between the clean and unclean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken to them by Moses."

The next historical circumstance we find recorded is of a person whose mother's name was Shelomith, an Israelitish woman, of the tribe of Dan, but his father was an Egyptian, and supposed to be a proselyte to Israel. This young man going out of his tent, quarrelled with a man of Israel, and, fighting, the son of Shelomith was worsted. Being enraged at this disgrace, and retaining, as we may suppose, too much of his father's principles, he began to curse and blaspheme the name Jehovah: for this he was immediately apprehended, and brought before Moses, who committed him to custody till the mind of the Lord should be known concerning him; for though the third commandment of the Decalogue forbids taking the name Jehovah in vain; yet this blasphemous cursing being an offence of a higher nature, against which no positive law was yet provided, Moses had recourse to the Lord for counsel and direction therein, who determined thus: "Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head,\* and let all the congregation stone him." Moses having from the divine oracle received the sentence, ordered it to be put in execution accordingly; and a law was thereupon made, that whosoever should from that time blaspheme the name Jehovah, whether he were an Israelite or a stranger, he should be stoned to death.

While the Israelites lay encamped in the Wilderness of Sinai, the Lord directed Moses to take Aaron, and with him a principal man of every tribe, whom the Lord pitched upon by name, to make a general muster of the

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\* *Head.* This way of laying hands on the heads of criminals may seem to arise from several causes: 1. That they were witnesses of the fact, and that the person condemned suffered justly, protesting that if he were innocent they desired his blood might fall on their own heads. 2. They put their hands on the head of the criminal in token of an expiatory sacrifice; for idolatry, blasphemy, and such grievous crimes, if they were not punished, they expected would attract guilt, not only on the witness, but the whole nation, which by the death of the criminal, as by a victim, might be expiated. 3. That the criminal was the just cause of his own death.



men capable of bearing arms. Moses therefore, with Aaron, and these assistants, having taken an exact account of all the males from twenty years old and upwards that were able to go forth to war in Israel, found the number to be six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty men, besides the Levites: For God had expressly exempted the tribe of Levi from this muster, because he had designed them to the peculiar service of the tabernacle; not only to take charge thereof, and of all the vessels belonging to it, but to take it down upon every removal, and carry both the tabernacle and the vessels, and set it up when they pitched again.

After this general muster, Moses and Aaron, by the express command of God, ordered the encampment of this great body of people in the following manner: They were disposed into four battalions, each under one general standard, which were so placed that they enclosed the tabernacle. The standard of the camp of Judah was first, which consisted of the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, the sons of Leah, pitched over against the tabernacle, on the east side of it, towards the rising of the sun. On the south-side was the standard of the camp of Reuben, under which were the tribes of Reuben and Simeon, the sons of Leah likewise, and of Gad, the son of Zilpah her maid. On the west side was the standard of the camp of Ephraim, under which were the tribes of Ephraim,\* Manasseh, and Benjamin. And on the north side was the standard of the camp of Dan, under which were the tribes of Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid, and of Asher the son of Zilpah. Between†

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\* *Ephraim.* Ephraim and Manasseh supplied the place of Joseph their father; and therefore they are taken to be Rachel's children, and thus they and Benjamin make the third standard.

† *Between.* Josephus in *Antiq. l. 3. c. 11.* tells us, That between each tribe in every one of these four quarters there were open spaces, like streets, where there were buying and selling as in a market, and tradesmen in their shops. This camp is thought to be a mile distant from the tabernacle, that is, a sabbath day's journey, as appears from Joshua iii. 4. where the distance between the people and the ark is commanded to be two thousand cubits.

the four great camps\* and the tabernacle were pitched four lesser camps, consisting of the priests and Levites, near to the tabernacle, in and about which their service lay. On the east side encamped Moses and Aaron, with Aaron's sons, who had the charge of the sanctuary. On the south side were the Kohathites, a part of the Levites descended from Kohath the second son of Levi. On the west side, behind the tabernacle, stood the Gershonites, another part of the Levites descended from Gershon, Levi's eldest son. And on the north side were planted the Merarites, the remaining part of the Levites, who sprung from Merari, Levi's youngest son.

This was the order of their encampment. The manner of their removal and marching was thus: When they were to remove (which was when the cloud was taken off the tabernacle) the trumpet was sounded, and upon the first alarm, the standard of Judah being raised, the three tribes which belonged to it moved forward. Then the tabernacle being taken down, the Gershonites and the Merarites attended the waggons with the boards and staves of it. When these were on their march, a second alarm was sounded; upon which the standard of Reuben's camp advanced with the three tribes under it. After them followed the Kohathites, bearing the sanctuary, which being more holy, and less cumbersome than the heavy boards and pillars of the tabernacle, was not put into a waggon, but carried on their shoulders. Next followed the standard of Ephraim's camp, with the three tribes belonging to it. And last of all, the other three tribes under the standard of Dan brought up the rear.

The† people of Israel, having continued some time

\* *Camps.* Each of these camps, as is said in the text, had its several banners or standards, and each standard its motto or inscription. Each standard likewise had a distinct sign worked on it: Reuben's standard had the image of a Man, Judah's of a Lion, Ephraim's of an Ox, and Dan's that of an Eagle. These same four creatures are mentioned by Ezekiel (*ch.* i. 10.) as composing the cherubic figures: a similar description we have in Rev. iv. 6.

† *The, &c.* Designing in the text to keep chiefly to the historical part of Scripture, and to preserve the connexion of matter of fact, with which the pre-

before the Mount of the Lord, decamped by God's command, on the first day of the second month, the second year after their coming out of Egypt. In their march the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord went before them, to search out a resting place for them: at the setting forward of which, Moses said, "Arise, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee." And when the ark rested, he added, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." Having marched three days into the wilderness, they came to a place called "the Graves of Lust," from what happened to the Israelites there. In consequence of their murmuring against the Lord, and complaining of the weariness of their journey, he was so incensed against them, that he sent down fire and destroyed those that were in the extreme parts of the camp. Alarmed at this judgment, they repair to Moses, upon whose intercession the fire was quenched, and the name of that place was called "Taberah," which signifies burning. This disaster, instead of terrifying them into their duty, did but increase

ceptive would interfere, it is thought more useful for the reader to continue the series of the history in the text, and insert the intervening precepts and orders in the notes. In the third and fourth chapters of Numbers, therefore, we have the Lord's taking the Levites to himself in exchange for the first-born, with the reason for his so doing: likewise his giving the Levites to the priests for the service of the tabernacle, distributing them into three classes or orders, and appointing them their several services. Afterwards in *cb. v.* follows that clear and excellent type of gospel purity, and christian church-discipline, expressed in commanding the children of Israel to put out of the camp every leper, and every one that had a running issue, and whosoever was defiled with the dead, both male and female; that they might not defile their camps, in the midst of which the Lord dwelt. In the sixth chapter follow divers laws relating to restitution in cases of trespass, and to the trial of jealousy between men and their wives; to the vow of Nazarites, to which is subjoined the form of that divine blessing which the Lord himself dictated for the priests to pronounce upon the people. The seventh chapter contains the offerings of the princes at the dedication of both the tabernacle and the altar, &c. The consecration and purification of the Levites are detailed in the eighth. A renewal of the passover, and the direction of the Israelites by the cloud, in the ninth chapter.



their murmuring : for being come to new quarters, they expected change of diet ; and because God did not immediately gratify them, they in contempt prefer the rank food of Egypt, onions, leeks, and garlic, to the delicious heavenly dainties with which God had daily fed them. Moses had often heard their murmuring, and patiently borne with them ; but now that they were become so numerous, and the increase of their numbers demanding still more care and vigilance to govern and provide for them, the great weight of this charge occasioned much uneasiness in the mind of Moses, who, in his address to God, complained of the heavy burden which the care of so numerous and mutinous a people brought upon him. God hears his complaint, and immediately provides a remedy ; bidding him choose seventy men of the elders of Israel, and bring them with him to the tabernacle of the congregation. “ And there (said the Lord) I will come down, and talk with thee ; and I will endue them with the same spirit with which I have inspired thee, and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee.” Moses accordingly brought the seventy elders of the children of Israel before the Lord, by whose Spirit they were immediately inspired, and straightway prophesied. This inspiration was so extensive, that two of those seventy, though they came not out with the rest to the tabernacle, but remained behind in the camp, were admitted among the rest, and received the same influence of the Spirit, and prophesied, as the others did. This so surprised a certain young man, that he ran from the camp to the tabernacle to inform Moses that Eldad and Medad, for so they were named, were prophesying in the camp. Joshua, who as yet was not acquainted with the operations of the Lord by his Spirit, overhearing this message, and thinking it some derogation from his master that they should prophesy, and not follow him, advised Moses to forbid them. But Moses, reproving him gently for his rashness, cried, “ Dost thou envy them on my account ? Would to God, that all the Lord’s people were inspired, and that they might prophesy.” This disinterested generosity of Moses affords an excellent example



to all christians, and especially to christian ministers, who should rejoice when useful men are raised up in the church, even though their own reputation may be diminished or obscured.

When Moses remonstrated to the Lord concerning his inability to support the government of so great a people without some assistance, part of his complaint was that the people wanted flesh, and he expostulates with God on the impossibility of their being supplied with it in that place, because they were so numerous. The Lord, knowing the great fatigue Moses had endured in the conduct of this people, bore with him, and only gave him this gentle rebuke; "Is the Lord's hand shortened? Thou shalt see whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not." Accordingly, when Moses with the elders had returned to the camp, and acquainted the people with it, a south wind arose, and drove vast numbers of quails\* from the sea-coast to the vicinity of the camp, where they lay about a yard thick upon the ground. The people, with the utmost greediness, began to gather the quails, which they did in such great quantities, (still distrusting God's providence, which had hitherto never failed them) as if they were to have no more. But God soon calls them to a dreadful account for their insolent demand of flesh, and criminal distrust of his power: for while they were regaling themselves with these dainties, God visited them with a very severe plague,† whereof many died, and were

\* *Quails.* These quails must be supposed to come from the Arabian or Red Sea; and as Paran and Kibroth-Hattaavah, were north and north east of the Red Sea, it must be a southerly wind. That they came from thence is the opinion of Josephus, Pliny, and several others; who affirm them to breed on the coasts there. The quail is a small bird, about half the size of a partridge, and its flesh is accounted a great delicacy.—It is a bird of passage.

† *Plague.* Commentators differ in opinion with respect to this plague: Some suppose it to be fire; and that Numb. xi. 33, refers to the fourth verse of the same chapter; which we think cannot be, because this is subsequent matter, and is named as a punishment for the Israelites desiring flesh. Besides, there are several circumstances that intervene between the third and thirty-third verses. Some will have it a consumption, others the common pestilence or plague. But by the words of the text v. 33, it more probably seems to have been a suffocating distemper,

buried in the place, which for their lusting after flesh was called "Kibroth Hattaavah," which signifies "The graves of lust or concupiscence."

From hence they took their journey to "Hazereth," which signifies "Palaces." And here another unhappy occurrence took place. Aaron and his sister Miriam, observing the great influence and authority of Moses their brother over the people, and that God chiefly made use of him in the delivery of his sacred oracles to them, began to envy him: and to afford some colour to the quarrel, they pretend to fall out with him on account of his marrying a foreigner, calling her an "Ethiopian;"\* and emulating Moses' great gifts and power, they added, "What! hath the Lord spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us?" Moses observed their discontent; and though he was naturally of a meek disposition, yet no man was more ready to resent any indignity offered to the Lord; but looking on this as a personal pique, he declined taking any notice of it. However, God, who was more immediately concerned in this, resolves to vindicate himself and his faithful servant; for, on a sudden, calling for Moses, Aaron and Miriam, at the door of the tabernacle he sharply reprehends them for their insolence, asking them, how they durst speak against his servant Moses? "You† share, (said he) the great prophetic office indeed, and to you I have declared my will in dreams and visions; but with Moses I have conversed more familiarly, and I will speak face to face with him,

like the quinsy, which choked them as they were eating, or soon after; for the words are very express, "While the meat was in their mouths the wrath of God fell upon them." This is further confirmed by Psal. lxxviii. v. 30, 31.

\* *Ethiopian.* Zipporah, Moses' wife, was a Midianite, and because Midian bordered on Ethiopia, she was so called, and it is sometimes in holy Scripture comprehended under this name. But here Zipporah is called Ethiopian in contempt; which ought not to have been done, for she having submitted to the Law, should have been reckoned an Israelite, as Ruth and Rahab were.

† *You.* Miriam is called a prophetess, Exod. xv. 20.

“ and shew him as much of my glory as he is capable of seeing.” Upon this the Lord withdrew in great displeasure from them. Moses had the comfort of seeing himself justified: but Aaron, to his great confusion, sees his sister Miriam made a dreadful example of God’s anger; for on a sudden she is become a loathsome deformed leper; and well knowing he deserved to share in this curse for his ungrateful murmuring, he immediately addresses himself to Moses, acknowledges their sin, begs pardon and intercedes for his sister, that she may be restored to her health. Moses, who was never wanting in charity even to his enemies, melts into pity, and complies with his request. But yet, to terrify others from exciting sedition again, and because the offence was public, God resolves to make an example of Miriam in her cure, and therefore he commands Moses to exclude her from the camp, as a common leper, for seven days, and then to receive her again.

Miriam being restored to the camp, the Israelites removed to the Desert of Pharan; from whence, after several encampments, they came to Kadesh-Barnea, on the frontiers of Canaan. Here Moses informs them that they were come near the promised land: and for their satisfaction, God commanded Moses to send twelve men, one of each tribe, to take a view of the country. He charged them to go up to the hills to observe whether the country were strong or weak; whether there were many inhabitants; how their towns were situated, and whether fortified; whether the soil were fertile or barren; whether it were planted with trees or not; what fruit they bore, and to bring a specimen of it; for now was the time when the first grapes were ripe, that is, in July.

With these instructions the twelve spies proceeded, and having taken a view of the country from north to south, in their return they passed through a fertile valley which abounded in vines, where they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes on it, but that of so vast a weight and bulk, that they were obliged to carry it upon a staff between two. Nor was this the only product of this happy soil; the golden fig, and beautiful pomegranate adorn the trees, and a variety of fruits load the luxuriant



branches. Of each of these they take a sample, and upon their leaving the place, from the great plenty of grapes, they call it the valley of Eschol, which signifies "a cluster of grapes." Having spent forty days in viewing and observing the country, they return to the camp of Israel at Kadesh; and having presented the fruits of the land which they had been surveying, to Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation, they related the observations they had made in their journey: "We have been (said they) in the country to which you sent us. It is a fertile and plentiful land; but the inhabitants of it are powerful: There are great cities with strong walls. We have seen there men of the race of Anak, warlike men, and of a gigantic stature. The Amalekites inhabit the south part of the land, the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites, the mountains; and the Canaanites the sea-coasts and the river Jordan." This was an alarming account to a timorous people, prepared already by their own discontents to receive any ill impression: which they immediately discovered: But Caleb, one of those who were sent to survey the country, to pacify them said, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are sufficiently powerful to overcome it." But the people declared against engaging in war, wishing themselves in Egypt again; and choosing rather to die in the wilderness, than to fall by the sword, and have their wives and children enslaved. In short, they propose to choose themselves a Chief, and return to Egypt. This so deeply affected Moses, that notwithstanding they were so obstinately bent upon their own ruin, he and Aaron, in the presence of the assembly, fell on their faces to deprecate the vengeance which they feared God would execute on these rebellious mutineers; while Caleb and Joshua, through excess of sorrow for the people's blasphemy, rending their clothes, boldly stood up, and endeavoured to convince them that they could, by God's promised assistance, make themselves masters of the whole country. "The land (said they) that we passed through is indeed a rich and fertile land, abounding with all things necessary for life. If we please the Lord, he will bring us



“into this land, and give it us. Do not therefore, by  
“rebelling against him, forfeit his promise and protec-  
“tion : nor be afraid of the people of the land, whom we  
“shall as surely conquer as we eat our food, and as easily ;  
“for God hath withdrawn his care of them ; and if the  
“Lord continue it to you, ye have nothing to fear.”  
This speech made so little impression upon them, that in  
a tumultuous manner they called out to stone them ; and  
which they would probably have done, had not God mi-  
raculously interposed by sending his glory, which visi-  
bly appeared at that instant in the tabernacle of the con-  
gregation before them all.

All this while Moses and Aaron lay prostrate on their  
faces, and God being highly incensed with this insolence  
of the Israelites, tells Moses he would send the plague  
that should extirpate this people, and would make him  
prince of a more numerous and powerful nation. But  
pious Moses, as he had before done, declining the private  
advantage proposed to himself, prefers the honour of God,  
and the good of this unworthy people, representing to  
the Lord, that if he destroyed the Israelites, the Egyptians  
and other surrounding nations, who knew he had taken  
them into his protection, would not fail to say he was un-  
able to carry them into the land he had promised them.  
Then imploring God's mercy, and with repeated and im-  
portunate intreaties begging pardon for the people, God  
at length suffered himself to be prevailed on, and, to  
satisfy Moses, he pronounced them pardoned : but it was  
with this restriction : for reproaching them with their  
vile ingratitude, who had so often and so wonderfully tasted  
of his bounty in providing against their wants, screening  
them from their enemies, and preserving them in all  
dangers ; since they had so often provoked him with  
their disobedience, he declared that not one of those who  
had murmured should enter into the promised land ; and  
that they should wander about in the wilderness, with  
their children for the space of forty years. And though  
God, at the pressing intreaty of Moses, reversed the sen-  
tence of sudden death upon the whole congregation of  
murmurers, yet the ten false spies, the immediate authors

of the rebellion, who had brought an evil report upon the good land, were punished with death at that time: for they died of the plague before the Lord. But Caleb and Joshua, who had done their duty in giving a faithful account of their journey and the observations they had made, were not only preserved alive, but highly commended of God, who gave them his promise that they should live to enter into the good land, and take possession of it.

Moses having reported these things to the children of Israel, they are said to have mourned greatly: but by their actions it doth not appear they were any better disposed; for changing their minds on a sudden, from a poor cowardly timidity, to a presumptuous rashness, they said the next morning, "We are ready to go to the place whereof the Lord hath spoken to us." But this was undertaken in their rebellious obstinate temper, and was adding sin to sin: which Moses well knew; for he endeavoured to restrain them; represented the danger to them; told them their enterprize was against the express command of God; that it would not prosper; forbade them going, upon pain of being defeated and slain; assured them that God had left them; and that the Amalekites and Canaanites had gained the passes in the mountains before them. These admonitions had no weight with these obstinate people: they presumptuously supposed the boldness of the attempt would wipe off the reproach of their former cowardice, and reinstate them in God's favour; and though the Ark of the Lord, which was to go before the Host, went not with them, nor Moses their general at their head, yet they resolutely marched to the top of the hills, where the enemy surprised, defeated, and slew many of them, and pursued the rest as far as Hornah.

After this, though it was but eleven\* days' journey from Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea, yet the people, through their disobedience, spent the best part of two years in going that eleven days' journey. And, which is still more

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\* Eleven. See Deut. i. 2.

strange, turning back from Kadesh-Barnea, and being near the confines of the promised land, they were thirty-eight\* more wandering in the wilderness before they could come to the borders of the promised land again. Moses having led them back into the desert towards the Red Sea, they continued thereabout, making in the above-mentioned time, eighteen several removals, or dislodgments, and at last they returned to Kadesh-Barnea, near the place from whence they went.

While they were in the wilderness many remarkable occurrences befel them. The first of which is of a man who, by a post-facto law, was adjudged to be stoned to death for violating the sabbath by gathering sticks on that day, the celebration of which God had strictly enjoined: and though there was no penalty annexed to the breach of it, those who brought the offender before Moses knew he would determine justly; and committing the man to safe custody, Moses enquired of God what he should do in this case, who immediately, from his heavenly oracle, returned this answer, "That the criminal should be conveyed without the camp, and there be stoned to death." Which was accordingly executed.

And now pride and malice blow up a faction into a flame, and give great disquiet to the peace of Israel. The haughty Corah, great grandson of Levi, separates from Moses and Aaron; and having seduced Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, of Reuben's family, and drawn in two hundred and fifty Levites to his party, who were men of fame and influence among the people, he made most grievous complaints against Moses and Aaron, charging them with pride in encroaching upon the liberties of the people, who, they said, were as holy as themselves. Moses hearing this fell† on his face, after which, rising

\* *Thirty-eight*, &c. See Deut. ii. 14.

† *Fell*, &c. This is a phrase often used to express divine adoration and application to God for help; and there is good reason to believe that at this time Moses, who was well acquainted with the gracious and ready assistance of God in time of need, might apply himself to the Lord for protection against this



from that humble posture, he with great courage and assurance let them know that the next day the Lord would decide the controversy, and would make it evident who were his servants, and who was holy, and would admit whom he had chosen to come near him. Then, with his usual calmness and serenity of mind, he argued the matter with them; he mildly rebuked their insolence, and told them that they took too much upon them. But in a more particular manner addressing himself to Corah, and the Levites who joined him, he said: "Hear ye sons of Levi: Is it a matter of so light concern, that the God of Israel hath distinguished you from the rest of Israel, to admit you to the more immediate service of the tabernacle, and to stand before the congregation, and minister to them? Is not this an honour sufficient to satisfy your ambitious spirit, but must ye aspire to the priesthood also? This is the cause of your clamours, and for this have ye moved the people to sedition. But be assured, whatever ye may pretend against Aaron, this insult is against the Lord; and it is against his dispensations that ye murmur and conspire." Dathan and Abiram stood at a distance while Moses talked with the rest, and therefore he sent for them to come to him; but they surlily returned answer, that they would not come. And to retort his own expressions upon himself, they add, "Is it a matter of so small moment, that thou hast brought us up out of a land that flowed with plenty, to kill us in the desert? Thou affectest dominion, and wouldst make thyself prince over us also. Notwithstanding thy fair promises, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards; but when we were ready to take possession of the promised

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mutinous crew, as apprehending some violence from them, who in this tumultuous manner attacked him. And it is very reasonable to think that, while he lay in this humble posture, God appeared to him, and both comforted and advised him, for presently after we read, Num. xvi. 5. that with great assurance he spoke to the rebels, and to vindicate himself, put the matter between him and them upon trial the next day.



“land, thou hast turned us back into this barren desert, to repeat the fatigues and hardships we had before undergone : we will not come.” These unjust reproaches highly provoked Moses, who, instead of returning any ill language to them, addressing himself to God, said, “Respect not thou their offering; for though they reflect thus unjustly upon me, I have not taken so much as an ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.” Then, summoning Corah and all his company to meet him and Aaron before the Lord the next day, he ordered them to bring their censers ready prepared with incense in them, and to appear all before the Lord. Accordingly on the morrow they came with great confidence; and having set fire to the incense in their censers, they boldly plant themselves in the door of the tabernacle with Moses and Aaron; and to bid the greater defiance to these holy men, they persuaded all the congregation to side with them. This daring conduct of the mutineers so provoked the Almighty, that he resolves to take the matter into his own hand; and darting forth his glory upon the tabernacle, he commands Moses and Aaron to withdraw, that he might consume the rebels. But the two good men knowing that the people were drawn into this insolence by the wicked arts of Corah and his party, prostrate themselves before the Lord, and by their prayers intercede for the people; “O God, thou God of the spirits of all flesh, (said they) “shall one man sin, and wilt thou be angry with all the people?” Their prayers are heard as soon as offered, and God bids them command the people to withdraw; who, affrighted with the amazing splendor that broke from the cloud, readily take the warning, and draw off from the tents of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, who came boldly out, and daringly stood at the doors of their tents with their wives and families. Then Moses addressing himself to the people, said, “By this you shall know that the Lord has commissioned me to do what I have done, and that I have undertaken nothing by my own authority. If these men die in the common way of nature, or be visited as other men, then take it for granted, the Lord hath not sent me: but if he deal

“ with them after a strange and unusual manner, and the  
“ earth, opening her mouth, swallow them up alive, then  
“ shall ye understand that these men have provoked  
“ the Lord.” Moses had no sooner spoken these words  
than terrible convulsions heave the labouring earth, the  
surface of which cleaving asunder, Corah and his fac-  
tion, with their goods and families,\* were swallowed up  
alive, and the ground closing upon them, they perished.  
The rest of the people that stood round them, and wit-  
nessed their dismal fate, being affrighted with the loud  
cries and shrieks of the perishing mutineers, fled away lest  
the earth should have swallowed them also. In the mean  
time, God, to complete his vengeance on the rest of the  
leaders in this rebellion, who had profanely attempted to  
offer incense, contrary to the law, sent down fire from  
heaven, and destroyed the two hundred and fifty men who  
had joined with Corah. The censers,† on which they in-  
tended to offer, remained amidst the conflagration; which  
God ordered to be preserved, but not for the same use as  
formerly, nor in the same form: Therefore he command-  
ed Moses to direct Eliezer, Aaron’s son, to beat them  
out into broad plates, and fix them to the altar of the burnt-  
offerings; assigning this reason for it, “ That it may be  
“ for a memorial to the children of Israel, that no stran-  
“ ger, or any that was not of Aaron’s family, should pre-

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\* *Families.* Except some of Corah’s sons. See Numb. xxvi. 11.

† *Censers.* The two hundred and fifty princes had not probably offered any incense, being prevented by death: however, it may be presumed that they had lighted their incense at the holy fire; by which they obtained (at least in the opinion of the people) a sort of consecration. The Lord therefore, to keep up among them the reputation and esteem of things devoted, would not have them put to profane uses: and to make a difference between his own institutions and mens’ contrivances, (especially those of wicked men) he ordered all those brazen censers to be wrought into broad plates, and to cover the altar with them; to the intent, that these brazen plates being polished bright, might by their lustre put the people in mind of the offence of those that were once the owners of them; and by seeing them often, (as they must do every time they looked on the altar) they might be warned against committing the same crime.

“sume to offer incense before the Lord, lest he should die  
“the death of Corah and his company.”

So visible a punishment, one would think, might have been sufficient to deter the Israelites, and keep them within the limits of due obedience for the future; but it affected them only for the present; for, from this judgment, the next day they took occasion to mutiny afresh, murmuring against Moses and Aaron, and charging them with the murder of so many persons. They, well knowing the unruly nature of this obstinate people, and dreading that degree of madness and violence to which they might have proceeded, took sanctuary\* in the tabernacle: where, as soon as they had entered, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared; which was a sure token that the Lord had something to say to them. Immediately God called to Moses and Aaron, and bid them be gone from the rest of the congregation, for he would consume them in a moment; on which they fell down, as they used to do on such occasions, to intercede for the people; but, early as they were in supplicating, vengeance was before them; for the Lord, provoked by their repeated rebellions, had already sent a plague† among them. Which Moses perceiving, told Aaron to take a censer, and put fire in it from the altar, and incense, and hasten to

\* *Sanctuary.* This shews to whom we ought to fly in any persecution or distress; and that God is our only refuge and protection. Whence the great fruit and advantage of persecution appears, that it compels us to apply to Him.

† *Plague.* Commentators are generally silent in their opinion what this plague was. Plague is a comprehensive term, as we see in the plagues of Egypt, which are all called plagues, though they were all different from each other. We may reasonably think that it was the pestilence or infectious sickness; and not fire, as *Cornel. a Lap.* and *Abuiens.* would have it, who are the only commentators that pretend to define it. The Septuagint likewise render it by a general word *Toraxsis*, signifying no more than *breaking forth*, or *raging*, Numb. xvi. 46, and 50. That it was a pestilence the Chaldee paraphrase seems to hint, in the complaint of the Israelites, Numb. xvii. 12. “We die by the sword, the earth swalloweth us up, and the pestilence consumeth us.”



the congregation to make an atonement for them. Aaron did as Moses directed him, and standing between the dead and the living, he prayed for the people, and the plague ceased. However, during the short space of time that this plague raged among them, there died fourteen thousand seven hundred men, without reckoning those who perished in the sedition with Corah and his company.

God having in so dreadful a manner declared against those who opposed the government of Moses, and the priesthood of Aaron, to end all contests and disputes amongst the ambitious and aspiring, resolved by a convincing miracle to put a period to the controversy, and establish and confirm the priesthood in the family in which he had placed it. In order to this, he commanded Moses to take a rod from each tribe, and to write upon it the name of the prince of that tribe to which it belonged; and on the rod of the tribe of Levi to write Aaron's name; which when he had done, he was to lay up these twelve rods in the tabernacle, before the ark of the testimony, where God was to declare his will farther to them. And to let them know that God himself would determine the controversy, and put an end to their murmurings, he would cause the rod of that man whom he had chosen to blossom.

Moses pursued this direction; and taking a rod from the prince of each tribe, wrote his name upon it, and laid up all the rods together in the tabernacle. The next day he went in, and brought forth all the rods, and in the presence of all the people he gave each man his rod, which they found to be the same as they had delivered to Moses over night, except Aaron's, which had not only budded, but blossomed, and produced ripe almonds. This was a convincing proof, that God had singled out Aaron to the priestly office. To preserve the memory therefore of the determination of this controversy, the Lord commanded Moses to bring back the rod of Aaron, and lay it up before the Ark of the Tabernacle, there to be preserved as a lasting memorial of their rebellion, and that



seeing it, they might forbear to murmur, and so prevent their death.

And now they began to recollect their deserts, and the causes of their punishment; and since God had in his own house visited them for their sins, they enumerate the several\* ways in which they had been punished. "Behold, we die! we perish! we are all lost!" And because God had, in the Tabernacle, expressed his displeasure more than once in punishing them in an exemplary manner, they cried out, "If we approach the Tabernacle we die!" not considering that their own iniquities drew the justice of God upon them in this place, for which he had ordered the altar to be covered with remarkable† shining brass, to put them in mind of their obedience.

The next ‡ historical matter we meet with is the Israelites being at Kadesh; where Miriam (who was sister to

\* *Several.* The Chaldee text describes their murmurings thus: We die by the sword; as in the case of their daring to enter the promised land contrary to Moses' advice, when they were slain by the Canaanites and Amorites—The earth swalloweth us up, as in the case of Corah and his associates—The pestilence doth consume us; as in the case of the fourteen thousand seven hundred who died of it.

† *Remarkable.* As being made of the brazen censers, which belonged to the two hundred and fifty princes who had joined Corah.

‡ *The next, &c.* The history breaks off at the seventeenth chapter of Numbers, and begins not again till the twentieth. In the eighteenth chapter is detailed the charge of the priests and Levites distinctly, with the portions or provisions of maintenance for each: in which, among other things, it is to be observed, that the priests had for their portion the offerings of the people, the Meat-Offerings, Sin-Offerings, Trespass-Offerings, Heave-Offerings, Wave-Offerings, First-Fruits, and Tithes of the Tithes, which they were to receive from the Levites, who received the tithes from the people. And these Tithes of Tithes, which the priests were to receive from the Levites, were to be offered by the Levites an Heave-Offering to the Lord; as the tithes themselves, which were given to the Levites, were offered an Heave-Offering to the Lord before. So that all the tithes, as well those from the people to the Levites, as those out of them from the Levites to the priests, were, by this ceremony of heaving, rendered as completely a part of the Ceremonial Law, as the rest of the offerings under that dispensation were. The nine-

Aaron and Moses, and elder\* than both) died, and was buried there. In this place, the Israelites, impatient of any inconvenience, for want of water, began, (as usual) to exclaim against Moses and Aaron; saying, "Why have ye brought the Lord's people into the Wilderness to kill them and their cattle? Why did you persuade us to leave the fertile land of Egypt to bring us into this barren place, which affords neither water to quench our thirst, nor fruits to satisfy our hunger? Would to God we had perished with our brethren before the Lord." Moses and Aaron in these difficulties, as before, address themselves to God; who commands Moses to take the rod, and with Aaron to assemble the people; and then, said the Lord, "Speak ye to the rock in their sight, and it shall yield water for them." Moses hereupon taking the rod† from before the Lord went, and with Aaron's assistance, assembled the people toge-

teenth chapter of Numbers treats of legal pollutions and uncleannesses; and of the Water of Separation or Purification, by which unclean persons were to be cleansed, directing how it should be made and used: which water was a lively type of the blood of Christ; who being himself perfectly clean, by sprinkling cleanseth the unclean.

By the interposition of these matters in these two chapters, we miss the account of the Israelites coming again to Kadesh in the Wilderness of Sin; where we find them in *cb. xx.* Only Moses, briefly reciting some of their frauds in *Deut. ii.* tells us, That after they had been beaten by the Amalekites and Amorites, they turned and took their way in the Wilderness along the Red Sea, as God had commanded Moses, *Numb. xiv. 25.* and encompassed Mount Seir many days; (which both Tremellius and our Bible in their Notes reckon thirty-eight years) till at length the Lord said, "Ye have compassed this mountain long enough, turn ye northward." *Deut. ii. 3.*

\* *Elder.* That she was elder than Moses appears from *Exod. ii. 4.* where she is said to be left to watch him when he was exposed in the ark of rushes.

† *Rod.* The text does not expressly tell us, whether this was the rod with which he performed so many miracles in Egypt formerly, or that by which they were so lately reclaimed from a rebellion: It seems most likely to be the latter; because in *Numb. xx. 9.* it is called "The rod from before the Lord," and which yet bore a miracle upon it, the buds and almonds. But be it which of them it may,

ther before the Lord. Moses hitherto had paid an exact and absolute obedience to all the commands which God had enjoined; but now, in deviating from his instructions, though seemingly but a little, he committed the greatest miscarriage of his whole life: for he was bid to speak to the rock before the people; but instead of doing this, he speaks to the people, saying, "Hear now, ye Rebels! Must we fetch water for you out of the rock?" In which he not only expressed impatience and haughtiness of spirit, but assumed to himself and Aaron the honour which belonged alone to God. Notwithstanding which, when he had smitten\* the rock twice with the rod, there immediately issued out water in great abundance: by which we may see, that God would not lose the honour of his miracle for the fault of his servant, but caused the water to flow from the rock. But to shew that he expected an exact obedience to his commands, though Moses had been his faithful servant in performing all his instructions before, yet now for the breach of his

the design of the Lord in commanding Moses to take the rod was, that the people, at the sight of it, might see their error, repent, and confess that nothing was too hard for their God.

\* *Smitten.* If it should be alledged in favour of Moses, That when he was sent to the rock before, Exod. xvii. 5, 6. he was ordered to take his rod in his hand, and smite the rock, that the water might come forth; and that from hence he might infer, he was also now to smite the rock with his rod: It may be said, That as he then followed his instruction, so he should have done here. He smote the rock then. because he was commanded; but he did not speak to it, because he was not commanded: so now he should have spoken to it, and not have smitten it, because he was commanded to do the one, but not the other. Those expositors, who would excuse this diffidence of Moses, impute it to his great age, (old age being naturally prone to choler and impatience) and that, being provoked at this fresh murmuring, he in diffidence struck the rock; not that he doubted of the power of God, or his faithfulness in performing his promise of producing water out of it; (for in his and Aaron's speech to the people he taxes them with incredulity;) but he questions whether God would think so rebellious and incredulous a people worthy of a miracle, who had slighted and so soon forgotten the many and late deliverances they had received from his bountiful hand, that never yet failed to relieve them."

obedience he denounces to Moses and Aaron (who was implicated in the same transgression) their doom in these words : “ Because ye believed me not, to sanctify\* me in “ the sight of the children of Israel, therefore you shall “ not have the honour of leading the people into the “ land† which I have given them.” From this unhappy event, the place was called “ Meribah,” which signifies ‘The Water of Contradiction.

Moses, being thus reprimanded, humbly submits, but continued in his command and care of the people; and intending to decamp, that he might secure their march from Kadesh, he sent an embassy to the king of Edom, (upon whose borders they now were) to inform him of the travels and labours of the Israelites; desiring leave to pass through his country, on account that they were both descended from Isaac and Rebecca; assuring him that they would commit no acts of hostility, nor trespass in his fields or vineyards, nor so much as drink of his water, without paying for it, but only travel on the king’s

any distress; or whether God, so justly provoked, had promised *ironically*, or *sarcastically*, or *conditionally*, that if the Israelites would cease to murmur, he would send them water. And that therefore he struck the rock with diffidence, believing it impossible or improbable, that such incredulous wretches should be indulged with a miracle. But these are mere conjectures and suppositions; for God is an absolute Sovereign, and expects an absolute obedience to his commands. Nor will he allow even his favourite servant Moses to vary from his command, or mix his own conceptions with it unpunished.

\* *Sanctify*. That is, you should shew them that I am holy, omnipotent, merciful and true; and that I can and would perform my promise to this wicked and ungrateful people, as ye know, and ought to remember I have often done.

† *Land*. This was the real land of Canaan on the other side of Jordan; for Moses did afterwards enter the promised land on this side of Jordan; when he took the kingdoms of Sihon and Og, which he gave to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh. This was a sore mortification to Moses not to see the promised Canaan, being thereby frustrated of the fruit of his long and troublesome conduct. By which we ought to learn to die to the world and ourselves, and live only to God.



highway. The surly Edomite not only refused them passage, but with a potent army came out to defend his frontiers, and oppose the Israelites, should they attempt to pass. They therefore turned another way, and marching from Kadesh came to Mount Hor, near the borders of Edom. And now the time drawing near, that the children of Israel were to enter the promised land, into which the Lord had informed Aaron he should not be admitted because of his transgression at Meribah, God gave him notice of his approaching death, and commanded Moses to take him and Eleazer his son, who was to succeed him in the office of High Priest, to the Mount, there to strip him of his priestly garments, and put them upon Eleazer his son. Which when Moses had done, Aaron died on the top of Mount Hor, being a hundred and twenty-three years old. And when the people saw that Aaron was dead, they bewailed him thirty days.

It was the beginning of the fifth month of the fortieth year of their travels from Egypt, when they were upon the borders of Canaan; and Arad, one of the kings of Canaan, who dwelt in the south, hearing which way they came, went out and fought them, and took some of them prisoners. This defeat brought them to a sense of their duty; and knowing they were now upon the borders of the promised land, they made a vow to the Lord, promising that if he would deliver this people into their hands, they would utterly destroy their cities. God takes them at their word, and gave them such success, that at Hormah\* they engaged these Canaanites and defeated them, took their cities, and utterly destroyed them.

Flushed with this victory, they dislodged from Mount Hor, and took their way by the Red Sea, marching round Edom, through which they had been denied† a passage, and

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\* *Hormah*. See Judges i. 17. This seems to be the same place to which the Amalekites had chased and beaten the Israelites about thirty-eight years before, Numb. xiv. 45.

† *Denied*. See Numb. xx. 18, 21.

forbidden to force\* their way. And because the way was long, the passes uneasy, and the country barren, they, forgetting their late success, and reflecting only on the present discouragements, relapse into their old humour of murmuring, complaining directly against God and Moses: "Wherefore (say they) have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness, where there is neither meat, nor drink, but this Manna,† which our stomachs loathe?" God seeing them thus forgetful of the many and repeated acts of his providence, punishes their bold impiety, by sending fiery serpents‡ amongst them, which destroyed a great number of these rebels. This punishment brought the rest to their senses, who flying to their injured Leader, acknowledge their guilt, and cry for mercy. Moses, notwithstanding he had lately incurred the divine displeasure on their account, addresses himself again in prayer to God for them; who, however, did not immediately take away the serpents, but leaving them to be a farther scourge, and to make them more sensible of their transgression, provided a remedy to prevent their death, and heal their wounds: for he ordered Moses to make a serpent of a fiery colour, and to set it up on a high pole, that the people, who were bitten by the fiery serpents, might, by looking up to it, be recovered. Moses accordingly made the form of a serpent in brass, and set it up as a banner; and whoever afterwards was bitten

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\* Force. See Deut. ii. 5.

† Manna. This is the same complaint which they made before. See Numb. xi. 6.

‡ Serpents. The Hebrew word is *Seraphim*, or *Burners*, so called either from their fiery colour, flaming and resplendent, resembling copper; or rather from the inflammatory effect of their bite, producing a sensation of intolerable heat. The serpent named *Dipsas*, has been usually selected, as answering to the nature of these fiery serpents. This creature possesses an active, penetrating venom. Dr. Shaw in his Travels, p. 388, says—"Vipers, especially in the Wilderness of *Sin*, were very dangerous and troublesome; not only our Camels, but the Arabs who attended them, running every moment the risque of being bitten." As the Doctor gives them only the general name of Vipers, we know not whether they were

by a serpent, if he looked upon that brazen serpent, recovered.

The Israelites at this time were at Phanon, whither they were come from Salmona, their first camp, after they removed from about Mount Hor. From Phanon they went and encamped at Oboth, and thence to Ije-abarim, in the desert that is before Moab to the eastward. Decamping from thence they came to Zared, and afterwards encamped by the river of Arnon, which is in the desert, and runs to the frontiers of the Amorites; for it divides them from the Moabites. They held on their march, and at length came into the plains of Moab, on the banks of Jordan, opposite to Jericho, to the top of Pisgah. From hence Moses sent ambassadors to Sihon king of the Amo-

of the same kind as those by which the Israelites were bitten. It appears however that serpents abound in that country.

Mr. Bruce says, that the kind of serpents called *Cerastes* were the most numerous in the district he travelled. He describes this serpent as found among the Balsam trees, and if we add "darting from tree to tree," as we find described by *Nieubr*, we come pretty near to the idea of these poisonous flying serpents.

The remedy which God, on the submission of the people, graciously provided for their cure, was not only miraculous, but singular in its kind, and designed to be a most instructive emblem to the Church in all future ages. We ought not to forget that sin, more poisonous and destructive to the soul than the venom of the serpent to the body, has spread its baleful influence through the whole race of mankind. But the power and grace of our God are displayed in the removal of this fatal malady, and in a way similar to that whereby the wounded Israelites were restored. For so, an infallible Commentator on this history assures us, John iii. 14, 15.—"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

The serpent, formed of brass on this occasion, remained among the Jews above seven hundred years, to the time of Hezekiah king of Judah; who in a holy zeal, pursuant to God's command, Ezra, xxiii. 24. Deut. vii. 5. removing the high places, breaking the images, and cutting down the groves, brake also in pieces this brazen serpent among the rest; (though so valuable a piece of antiquity) because he found the people had for a long time committed idolatry, in burning incense to it. And to put a contempt upon it, he called it *Nebushtan*, a piece of brass only. 2 Kings xviii. 4.

rites, to demand a passage through his country, promising not to break into the fields or vineyards, nor to drink of the water, but only to march along the highway, till they were past his country. The Amorite prince, not thinking it safe to receive so numerous and unsettled a people into the heart of his kingdom, positively denied them passage: and thinking it better policy to attack than be attacked, gathering what force he could, marches out to give them battle at Jahaz, where Israel routed him, and seized his country. They likewise took Heshbon, and the villages about it, which Sihon had before taken from the Moubites; and being thus possessed of the Amorites' land, they dwelt there. After this, Moses sent out forces to discover Jazar, another city of the Amorites, which they took, with all its territories, and drove out the people that dwelt there. Then turning another way, they marched towards Bashan, where the Giant\* Og, another Amorite king, reigned. This monstrous prince, with his gigantic troops, drew out to give the Israelites battle. But lest they should be discouraged at the sight of this formidable army, who exceeded the common size of nature, Moses, by the command of God, bid them fear nothing, for he had delivered them into their hands, and they should obtain as easy a conquest over them, as they did over Sihon, king of the Amorites. Israel thus encouraged, joined battle, and slew king Og and his sons, and all his people. They also took all his cities, threescore in number, all fenced with high walls, gates and bars, besides open towns and villages a great number; destroying utterly the inhabitants, but keeping all the cattle and

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\* *Giant.* The description of this gigantic king, who was the last of the race of the giants, we have in Deut. iii. 11, &c. whose stature we may guess by the size of his bed, which being made of iron, for strength, was nine cubits in length, and four cubits in breadth, after the cubit of a man, which being the common cubit, containing half a yard, or one foot and a half of English measure, if reduced to yards or feet, will make four yards and a half, or thirteen feet and a half, for the length, and two yards, or six feet for the breadth of the bed.



the spoil of those cities for a prey to themselves, as they had done before in the case\* of Sihon, the other Amorite king.

Encouraged by these successes, the Israelites march to the plains of Moab, and encamp on this side Jordan by Jericho. The approach of these victorious strangers strikes a terror wherever they come, and the fame of their late success against the Amorites, threw the king of

\* *Case, &c.* See Deut. iii. 4, 5, 6, 7. and so they were commanded, Deut. xx. where the laws of war are particularly laid down : by which they were required upon their approach to any city, to offer peace first ; which if the inhabitants accepted, and surrendered to them, they should only make them tributaries. But if they refused peace, and obliged them to besiege and storm the place, they should, when they had taken it, put all the men to the sword ; but might keep the women and children, with the cattle and other spoil for themselves. These were their instructions for the cities of remoter countries ; but for the cities of those neighbouring people, which the Lord had given them for an inheritance, as particularly the Hittites and Amorites, the Canaanites and Perizzites, the Hivites and Jebusites, they were to save none alive, but utterly to destroy all the men, women and children. Now as this execution was a type of the spiritual warfare against the enemies of the soul ; of which none, old or young, great or small, are to be spared, or saved alive ; so the political reason of this martial severity is given in the 18th verse of Deut. xx. “ That they teach you not to do after their abominations, which they have done unto their gods, so should you sin against the Lord your God.”

The enemies of Revelation have raised a hideous outcry against the cruelty of the Israelites in their treatment of the Amorites, &c. and have asserted that they could never have received their instructions for that purpose from God the fountain of all goodness. But we are to observe that the Israelites were in this instance merely the instruments of a righteous Sovereign, who had long been provoked with the outrageous wickedness of the nations. Four hundred years before this period, we find God saying to Abraham, (Gen. xv. 16.) “ The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full,” but now, it is evident, that they had arrived to a dreadful pitch of wickedness. A specimen of their morals we have in the prostitution of the young women of Midian in order to reduce them to the practice of idolatry, to which abomination they were extremely devoted, even to the dedicating their children to Moloch and sacrificing them to him by fire. Adultery, incest, bestiality, and all kinds of abomination were avowedly practiced among them. The Israelites therefore were merely the instruments which God employed for the extirpation of a people unfit to live, and were no more to be blamed than an executioner who performs the sentence of the law upon a criminal justly condemned to

Moab and his people into a terrible consternation.\* Balak, the king, knowing himself too weak to engage the mighty force of Israel, advised with the chiefs of Midian,† to whom he represented the common danger of these invaders. The result of their consultation was this, that King Balak should send messengers to Balaam‡ the son of Beor, who lived at Pethor, a city in Mesopotamia, to invite and bribe him to curse the Israelites; for they had so great an opinion of his skill and power in divination, that they thought he could curse or bless as he pleased. By general consent therefore they depute a select number of their chief men with presents, to invite him to accompany them to Balak. When they came to him, and had delivered their message from the king, he desired them to tarry

die. It is true there is something very affecting in the case of the multitude of young children, who were involved in the common calamity: but we may as well object to the providence of God in other calamities, or when a pestilence, a famine, or a deluge sweeps away, without discrimination, old and young; and it is no uncommon thing for children to be involved in the miseries of their offending parents. In a word, we are assured by sacred writ that the expulsion of the nations of Canaan was the just reward of their extreme vices, see Deut. ix. 4, 5. "Speak not thou in thine heart, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land; but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thy heart dost thou possess their land, but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee."

\* *Consternation.* If the Moabites had known the protection they were under, they needed not to have been afraid; for, if they would have been quiet, they were particularly exempted from the sword of Israel, Deut. ii. 9.

† *Midian.* The Midianites were neighbours and confederates with the Moabites; therefore Balak represents to them the danger, and asks their advice and assistance.

‡ *Balaam.* Several Fathers represent Balaam as a wizard, and prophet of the devil, but by the free access he had to God, particularly Numb. xxiv. 13. and xxii. 18. it appears that he was not a prophet of the devil; though it is plain from the holy text he was covetous, and St. Peter, *Epist.* 2. *cb.* ii. v. 15. says, "He loved the wages of unrighteousness."

with him that night, for he could give them no answer till he had consulted the Lord.

God, who knew the sordid mind of Balaam, to try how he would represent the matter, asked him, "What men they were, who were with him? They are some, said he, whom the King of Moab hath sent to me, to let me know, that there is a people come out of Egypt, which cover the face of the earth; and to desire me to come to him, and curse them, in hopes that he then may be able to overcome them, and drive them away." But God said to him, "Thou shalt not go with them, nor curse that people, for they are blessed." Balaam, not daring to disobey the command of the Lord, arose in the morning, and dismissing the messengers said, "Return to your own country; for the Lord refuseth to give me leave, to go with you." They return to the king, but misreport Balaam's answer; for instead of telling him, that God had refused to let him come, they tell him, that Balaam refused to come. Whereupon Balak falsely suggesting to himself, that either the number and quality of his messengers did not answer Balaam's ambition; or the value of the presents his covetousness, resolves to gratify both; and therefore he immediately dispatches messengers of more honourable rank, and with larger proposals. "Let nothing (said he) hinder thee from coming to me; for I will promote thee to very great honour, and give thee whatsoever thou wilt ask, if thou wilt come and curse this people."

Though Balaam had received an express command from the mouth of God, neither to go, nor to curse Israel; yet he did not disapprove of the offer, and only tells the messengers, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God." But to shew his wicked inclination to the promised reward, he fawningly intreats the messengers to tarry all night with him, that he might know what the Lord would say farther to him. This was tempting God; who therefore in displeasure left him to his own will.\* He had positively at first told him his mind, and it

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\* *Own will.* Thus God dealt with the Israelites afterwards, when they, rejecting his government, would needs have a king, that they might be like other



was the highest disobedience and presumption to pretend or offer at the reversing of it, by a farther application. However, blinded with covetousness and pride, he again addressed himself to God; who, offended at his obstinacy, leaves him to himself, and tells him, "If the men come to call thee, rise\* and go with them; but what I shall say to thee, that only shalt thou do."

Notwithstanding this permission to go, God was resolved to make Balaam sensible of his displeasure. Upon this concession he arose in the morning and went with the princes of Moab: but as he was on the road, the Angel of the Lord stood on the way with a drawn sword in his hand. Balaam's mind was so taken up with the expectation of the advantage he should make of this expedition, that he thinks of nothing else; but it pleased God to give the ass, on which Balaam rode, such quickness of sight, that she both saw the angel and shunned him, by turning out of the road into the field. Balaam for this beats the ass, and struggling to put the beast into the way, the angel stood in another narrow path between two walls, which enclosed some vineyards. The ass, seeing the angel, pushed up to the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot. This so incensed him, that he beat her again. But when the angel went farther, and stood in a narrow place, where the ass could not turn, she fell down under him. Balaam was now in a greater passion than before, and beat her with his staff. But God, to rebuke the

nations, 1 Sam. viii. 7. He answered their desire; but he did it in his anger, Hosea xiii. 11. And at other times, when they would not hearken to him, he gave them up to their own hearts' lust, and let them walk in their own counsels, Psal. xviii. 11, 12. From whence we may observe how unfit we are to choose for ourselves; especially in opposition to God's immediate commands and instructions.

\* *Rise, &c.* This by the consent of interpreters is looked upon, not as a command, but a permission; and seems ironically spoken; as if God had said, "Since thou art so eager to go, though thou knowest it is against my mind, take thy own course; go if thou wilt. But yet thou shalt not gain thy end; thou shalt go with this restriction on thy will, Thou shalt say nothing, but what I shall direct thee."



madness of the prophet, miraculously opened the mouth of the ass, and she said to him, "What have I done to thee, that thou shouldst beat me these three times? Because, (said he) thou hast deserved it in mocking me: had I a sword in my hand I would kill thee." The ass replied, "Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast been used to ride, ever since I was thine; did I ever serve thee so before?" He answered, "No."\* The unusualness of this accident, one would think, might have been an admonition to Balaam, to let him know there was something more than common in the ass's speaking; but his resentment against the ass for bruising his foot and throwing him, and stopping him thus upon the road, when he was in haste to be made rich and great, had so blinded him, that he thought nothing of it, till God himself opened his eyes, and let him see the angel standing in the way with his sword drawn in his hand; at the sight of which he bowed himself down, and fell on his face. The angel expostulates with him, tells him his undertaking was perverse, in attempting to go against the express command of God, and that therefore he was come to stop him; and but for his ass, which he had so barbarously used, he had slain him.

Balaam, convicted with this just reproach, confesses his sin, and faintly offered to turn back, if his journey displeased the Lord. But this he needed not have said; for he knew well enough, that his undertaking from the beginning displeased God, because at his first address he was forbidden by him to go. However, the Lord resolved out of this man's wicked inclination to raise some advantage; and therefore since he was gone so far, he would not send him back, but make him, who was hired to curse, be the instrument of pronouncing a blessing on his people. Having thus chastised Balaam on the way, he

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\* *No.* It has been objected that Balaam discovers no surprise at this wonderful event—the speaking of a brute creature. But it is possible he might express his amazement, though in the brevity of this history it be omitted. Infidels have affected to laugh at the power of speech given to an ass, but nothing is too hard for the Lord, and any miracle might as well be objected to as this.

suffered him to go on, but with this charge, that he should only speak what God should tell him.

Balaam, thus dismissed, went on his journey with the princes of Moab; and when Balak understood that Balaam was coming, that he might the more oblige him by personal civilities, he came out himself to meet him, receiving him upon the confines of his dominions. At their meeting, the king in a friendly manner blamed Balaam for refusing to come to him upon his first sending, since it was in his power to advance him: But Balaam, to excuse himself, let him know what restraint the Lord had laid upon him. Then Balak entertained him publicly with his princes and great men that day, the next day he brought him up into the High Places\* of Baal,† that from thence he might take a view of the camp of Israel. While they were here, the prophet directs the king to order seven‡ altars to be erected for him there; and seven oxen, with seven rams, to be prepared. Which being done, they both together offered an ox and a ram upon each altar. Then leaving Balak to stand by his burnt-offering, Balaam withdrew to consult the Lord, who meets and instructs him what to say; and returning to Balak, whom he found standing at the altar, and the princes of Moab with him, he thus addressed himself to them: “Thou hast caused me, O king, to come from Aram,§

\* *High Places.* The Scripture calls *high*, those eminences and groves which the idolatrous nations consecrated to their gods, and where they in a brutish and lascivious manner solaced themselves.

† *Baal.* Some will have the temple of Baal to be in those high-places, others the statue. As to the word Baal, it is sometimes a proper name (as here in this place) sometimes it is the common name of idols: Thus the Phoenicians called their god Baal; the Babylonians theirs Bell, or Belus, which is the same.

‡ *Seven.* The number *Seven* was esteemed sacred among the Israelites, (from whom probably Balaam might have learnt it) as appears in Lev. iv. 6. where the priest is said to sprinkle the blood of the bullock seven times before the veil of the Sanctuary.

§ *Aram.* The same as Mesopotamia, which the Hebrews call Aram Naharaim.

“ out of the mountains of the East, to curse the family of  
 “ Jacob, and bid defiance to Israel. But how shall I  
 “ curse those whom God hath not cursed? and how shall  
 “ I defy those, whom the Lord hath not defied? From  
 “ the top of the rocks I see their Protector, and from  
 “ the hills I behold him. Behold, this people shall be  
 “ separated to God, and distinguished from all other  
 “ people in religion, laws, and course of life: they  
 “ shall not be reckoned among the nations.” Then  
 setting forth the prosperity and increase of Israel, he  
 concluded by saying, “ Let me die the death of the righ-  
 “ teous, and let my last end be like his.”

Balak was offended at this answer, and in a passionate  
 haste, asks, “ What hast thou done? I sent for thee to  
 “ curse my enemies, and thou hast blessed them !” Balaam  
 excused\* himself by the necessity of his instruc-  
 tions, from which, at this time, it was not in his power to  
 deviate. However, Balak is not discouraged; from a  
 change of the place, he hopes a change of fortune, or  
 better success; and therefore taking Balaam into the  
 field of Zophim to the top of Pisgah, he tries whether he  
 can curse from thence. Balaam, who was willing to please  
 him, had seven altars erected there, and a bullock and a  
 ram offered on each. Then withdrawing again, as before,  
 to consult the Lord, he received fresh instructions. Balak  
 now began to understand the interview between the Lord  
 and Balaam, and upon his return to him and his attend-  
 ants, who were big with expectation of the result, de-  
 manded what the Lord had spoken? Upon which Balaam,  
 to bespeak the greater attention and regard to what he  
 should say, began thus. “ Consider, O Balak, thou son

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\* *Excused.* From Balaam's excuse, Numb. xxiii. 12, some interpret, as if he would have cursed the Israelites, if he could: and indeed if we consider what Moses told the Israelites, Deut. xxxii. 5, “ Nevertheless, the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam, but turned the curse into a blessing to thee;” we may well conclude that Balaam did earnestly labour with God by persuasion or intreaty to have had liberty to have cursed the children of Israel.



“ of Zippor, consider, that God, who hath already blessed  
 “ Israel, and forbidden me to curse them, is not like  
 “ man, that he should renounce his promise, or repent  
 “ of his purpose. Hath he promised, and shall he not  
 “ perform? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it  
 “ good? Behold I have received a commission to bless,  
 “ and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. He  
 “ hath\* not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he  
 “ seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with  
 “ him, and the shout† of a king is among them. God  
 “ hath brought them out of Egypt; he hath, as it were,  
 “ the strength of an unicorn.‡ Surely no enchantment  
 “ can prevail against Jacob, nor any divination against  
 “ Israel. So that considering what God shall work at this  
 “ time for the deliverance of his people, all the world  
 “ shall wonder and say, What hath God wrought! Who  
 “ hath put his people out of the reach of fraud or force,  
 “ and turned the intended curse into a blessing.” And  
 to shew their future strength and success, he adds, “ The  
 “ people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up them-  
 “ selves as a young lion: they shall not lie down until  
 “ they eat of the prey, and drink of the blood of the  
 “ slain.”

This was such a mortification to Balak, that he silences  
 Balaam, forbidding him either to curse or bless. But his

\* *He hath, &c.* The former national sins of Israel were atoned for and pardoned: the people were not at that time guilty of idolatry or rebellion; but were in a very obedient disposition, had much true religion among them, and were comparatively righteous. Thus the true believer is fully pardoned and accepted, and really sanctified and obedient: in him the Lord beholds not iniquity, or perverseness; none allowed, none unsubdued, none unpardoned. *Scott.*

† *Shout.* So Jerome, Arias Motanus, Tremellius and Junius render it. That, is the triumph of a king victorious over his enemies.

‡ *Unicorn.* This animal (generally supposed to be the Rhinoceros, or Rheem) is frequently used to express extraordinary strength: as here Numb. xxiii. 22. Psal. xxix. 6. Job xxxix. 12. Deut. xxxiii. 17. Psal. xxii. 21. and xcii. 11, &c.



eagerness to have Israel cursed, made him change his mind: for he calls for Balaam again, and intreats him to try another place, in hopes that God would permit him to curse Israel. Upon which, Balaam followed Balak to the top of Mount Peor, a hill that looked towards the Wilderness. Whatever ground Balak might have for his hopes, it is certain that Balaam knew the positive will of God in this case was to bless and not to curse; and this he had declared to be irreversible, when he told Balak God was not like fickle man; yet stimulated with the blind desire of reward, he consents to the wish of Balak again to tempt the Lord: for he there erected seven altars, and laid seven sacrifices thereon. But having in vain tried all his arts of divination,\* and seeing that God was resolved to continue blessing Israel, without withdrawing, as before, (under pretence of consulting the Lord) surveying the extended camp of Israel, the Spirit† of the Lord came upon him, and he cried out in an ecstasy, “How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!” Then, by significant metaphors, he foretold the extent, fertility and strength of Israel, and that those who blessed them should be blessed, and those who cursed them should be cursed.

Balak exasperated to find that Balaam, whom he had called to curse the people of Israel, had blessed them three several times, smiting‡ his hands together, upbraided Balaam with having deceived him, in blessing those whom he was sent for to curse. Then, unable any longer to restrain his anger, commands him to make haste and be gone; “For I thought, (said he) to have promoted thee to great honour, if thou hadst effected my design in cursing Israel; but the Lord hath hindered thy preferment.” Balaam

\* *Divination.* See Numb. xxiv. 1.

† *Spirit.* In Numb. xxiii. it is observable that while Balaam used his art of divination or enchantment, he had only a word put into his mouth; but now having laid aside his enchantments, the Spirit of God came upon him.

‡ *Smiting, &c.* This was a token of great displeasure, as smiting the breast was of sorrow.

had recourse to his old excuse, that he could not exceed the commands of the Lord, but must speak what he put into his mouth: and though he was willing to gratify the king of Moab in some sort, and perhaps (considering his covetous temper) to entitle himself to some reward, he offered to advertise\* him now at parting, what the Israelites should do to his people in the latter days: but still, against his own inclination, he bestowed blessings on Israel, and prophesied, that a Star should come forth from Jacob, and a Rod from Israel; that it should smite the chiefs of Moab, and destroy the children of Seth; that Edom should fall under its power, and that the Amalekites and Kenites should be extirpated. In fine, he foretold, that the Western nations, the Greeks and Romans, should vanquish the Assyrians, destroy the Hebrews, and themselves perish.

After these predictions, as if vexed at his own disappointment in missing the expected reward, and to be revenged on the Israelites as the occasion of it, he instructs† the Moabites and Midianites in a wicked artifice; which was to send their daughters to the camp of the Israelites, to draw those people into idolatry; the sure method to deprive them of the assistance of God, who protected them. This artifice succeeded, for the very next account we have of the Israelites is, that they lay encamped at Shittim;‡ where many of them were deluded by the Moabitish and Midianitish women, and were drawn in,

\* *Advertise.* See Numb. xxiv. 14. But that this was in revenge, is plain from the next note.

† *Instructs.* After Balaam had given Balak what hints he could concerning the ruin of his people by the Israelites, which was no very comfortable admonition; (for he did not at the same time instruct him how to avoid that ruin) by way of revenge he puts them in a method to render the people of Israel odious to their God, and taught Balak how to betray Israel, and draw them into fornication and idolatry, which soon after followed. This indeed is not mentioned in Numb. xxiv, where this passage or interview between Balak and Balaam ends; but Moses in ch. xxxi. v. 16. plainly refers to the counsel of Balaam, and lays the whole blame on him.

‡ *Shittim.* Which signifies *turning aside.*

not only to commit fornication with them, but to assist at their sacrifices, and worship their gods, even Baal-Peor.\*

The greatness of this sin appears in the severity of the punishment: for God commanded Moses to take the chiefs of those who had joined themselves to Baal-Peor, and hang them up before the Lord in the sight of all the people. Moses accordingly gave charge to the Judges† of Israel to see execution done, every one on the men under his charge, who had sacrificed to Baal-Peor. But the divine justice did not stop here. Their fornication must be punished as well as their idolatry; which was aggravated exceedingly by a person of considerable worth and dignity. The daring Zimri, the son of Salu, prince of a chief house among the Simeonites, took Cozbi, the daughter of Zur, who was also a prince of a chief house in Midian, and insolently brought her to the Israelitish camp, in contempt of Moses, and in sight of all the congregation, who, because of the late execution done upon their princes, stood weeping before the door of the tabernacle; led her openly to his tent and his bed. This superlative impudence, and open violation of God's law, none offered to resent, but Phineas, Aaron's grandson; who, rising up from the congregation, and filled with a holy zeal, took a javelin in his hand, and followed them to the tent; where he thrust them both through. This zealous act of Phineas put a stop to the plague, which God had sent among the people for this audacious act of Zimri, and the lewdness and impiety of his comrades. However there died on this occasion no less than twenty-four‡ thousand. This remarkable instance of pious zeal

\* *Baal-Peor.* Supposed to be the beastly Priapus, adored with obscene rites.

† *Judges.* These were the judges, probably, whom by the advice of his father-in-law Jethro, with God's approbation, he had set over the people, Exod. xviii.

‡ *Twenty, &c.* In this number, it is probable, that Moses includes the thousand princes that were hanged. Which computation reconciles this place to that of the Apostle, 1 Cor. x. 8. where he mentions but twenty-three thousand, without the thousand princes that were hanged.



for the honour of God, procured for him not only the divine approbation, but a perpetual settlement of the priesthood in himself and his posterity.

These disorders being quieted, and the offenders punished, the next business was to take vengeance of the Midianites,\* who had debauched the Israelites with their idolatry and fornications. In order† to which Moses commanded a detachment of twelve thousand select men, a thousand out of every tribe, to go against the Midianites; among whom went the zealous Phineas, who carried with him the holy instruments, or trumpets, to animate the people. This was indeed but a small army to invade so great and powerful a people. But God, who put them upon this expedition, went along with them, and blessed them with such wonderful success, that they slew five kings and all their men; among whom was the

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\* *Midianites.* Under this name the Moabites were also comprehended.

† *In order.* In Numb. xxv. 16. God commanded Moses to vex the Midianites for betraying Israel, and to smite them. But the execution of this order is interrupted by some things, of which, as they are not strictly historical, we shall here give a short account. After the plague, the Lord commanded that the people, that is, the males, should again be numbered. In which the same method was appointed to be taken that was used in the former numbering, Numb. i. For the other tribes, being numbered with respect to war, and to their possessing the land, were reckoned from twenty years old: but the Levites being exempted from war, and excluded from possessions, were numbered from a month old. The account of this is recorded at large in Numb. xxvi. by which it appears, that of all who were first numbered by Moses and Aaron in the Wilderness of Sinai, Numb. i. there was not then a man left alive, besides Moses, Joshua, and Caleb. So that in less than forty years, six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty grown men (for so many were numbered, *cb.* 1. beside the tribe of Levi) died in the Wilderness. And yet now at this second numbering there were found six hundred and one thousand, seven hundred and thirty men of twenty years old and upwards, besides Levites.

The next thing is an enumeration of divers laws and ordinances; some of which were more general, as relating to the daily burnt-offerings, and other offerings upon particular festivals. Some were more particular, as private vows of virgins, wives, widows, and divorced persons, and the settling of inheritances in the female line. Of which, see from Numb. xxviii. to xxx.



wicked prophet Balaam,\* who though he had before escaped the sword of the angel, yet now fell a sacrifice to the injured people of God. They burned all the cities and castles, took all the women and children prisoners, and seized on their cattle, flocks, and goods: after which, laden with the spoils of their enemies, they return in triumph to the Israelitish camp. In their way home they are met by Moses, and Eleazar the high-priest, and all the princes; who congratulate their success. But Moses, seeing the Midianitish women among the captives, was much offended with the officers of the army for saving them; for these, said he, by the counsel of Balaam, caused the Israelites to sin against the Lord in the business of Peor, and provoked him to send a plague upon the congregation of Israel. And thereupon he commanded them to kill every male among the children, and every married woman, and to save none alive but the virgin females. After which they were to abide seven days without the camp, and both soldiers and spoils pass through the ceremonies of a legal purification; which when they had performed, God directed Moses to take an account of the whole prey, and dividing it into two equal parts, to give one to the soldiers who had taken it, and the other to the rest of the people that stayed at home. Out of the soldiers' portion, he levied the five hundredth part, both of persons and beasts; which he paid as a tribute to Eleazar the priest, for a heave-offering of the Lord; and out of the other portion, which belonged to the people, one part out of fifty of both persons and beasts was given to the Levites. Then the officers of the army, out of the other parts of the booty which they had taken, as jewels of gold, bracelets, rings, ear-rings and tables, brought their expiatory offering to atone for their transgression in saving the Midianitish

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\* *Balaam*. By this it seems he was not got home; and it may be, with reason, conjectured, that he was devising much the same mischief against the Hebrews, while he was among the Midianites, as when he was among the Moabites; and therefore he justly fell by the sword of Israel.

women, and their gratulatory offering of thanksgiving for so great a victory. The greatness of which may be gathered from the number of their prisoners and cattle; the virgin females were thirty-two thousand; all the rest of the people, men women and children were put to the sword. The spoil, in cattle and flocks, consisted of six hundred and seventy-five thousand sheep, seventy-two thousand oxen, and sixty-one thousand asses, beside rich goods and ornaments; and to render this victory the more brilliant and memorable, it was obtained without the loss of a single man on the part of Israel, as appears from the report of the officers on a muster\* made after the battle.

The Israelites thus taking possession of the country on this side Jordan, the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, observing it to be a fertile soil, and good pasturage, requested leave of Moses to settle in that country, on condition that they should march with the other tribes to conquer the land in which they were to settle, that they would not return till the other tribes were in possession, and that they would claim no part of the lands that were beyond Jordan. Moses, at first, thought they intended to venture no further, but wished to sit down in a country already gained, and to forsake their brethren, the rest of the tribes: upon which he severely blamed them for attempting, by so base a proposal, to discourage the rest of the Israelites. But when he understood their real design, and upon condition that they should perform their promise, he granted their request.

After† this, Moses gives a particular recital of the several stations and removals, which the children of Israel made from Rameses in Egypt, to the river Jordan in Canaan. Then he describes the bounds of the promised land, and gives the names of the persons appointed to divide it among the tribes of Israel. And afterwards

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\* *Muster*. See Numb. xxxi. 49.

† *After*. The Matter of this paragraph is contained in Numb. *cb.* xxxiii. xxxiv, xxxv.

order is given, that the children of Israel should assign to the Levites forty-eight cities, with suburbs annexed, in which they might live among the tribes, and of which number six were appointed to be cities of refuge to which the man-slayer might flee, who had happened to kill a man unintentionally. But provision was made, that he, who should be duly convicted of wilful murder, should be put to death : and in capital cases it was provided, that none should be convicted of such crimes by the evidence of one single witness. A law was also made, that every daughter, who should possess an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, should be married to one of the tribe of her father, that so the children of Israel might enjoy every one the inheritance of his father ; and the inheritance not be transferred to another tribe. This was grounded upon a law before\* made, which empowered daughters to inherit lands, where the heirs male should be deficient ; and was the case of Zelophehad's daughters, who, upon obtaining this act, were required to marry within the family of their father's† tribe.

By this time, the forty years allotted for their journey were nearly expired. Moses therefore, considering that the present generation of the Israelites, now ready to pass over Jordan to take possession of the promised land, were either born since the law was given at Mount Sinai, or were, at that time too young to understand and remember it, thought proper to make a solemn and public repetition thereof.

A little before his death, therefore, he assembled the people of Israel, on the first day of the eleventh month, in the fortieth year from their departure out of Egypt, (the people being yet in the plains of Moab, by Jordan,

\* *Before.* See Numb. xxvii. 1, 2, &c.

† *Father's.* Upon this they are said, Numb. xxxvi. 11. to be married to their father's brother's sons. That is, as it is explained in v. 12. They were married into the families, or to some that were of the families, of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. Which takes off the force of their argument, who from hence would infer the lawfulness of marriages between first cousins.



and near Jericho) he repeated to them briefly all\* that had befallen their fathers since they left Egypt: The gracious dealings of God with them; their unruliness, disobedience, and rebellions, which had so often provoked the Lord to punish them, and brought not only upon them, but by their means upon himself also, that grievous sentence, That they should not enter into the good land. Which account he often repeats, that these might take warning by the miscarriages of their forefathers. Then he repeated the Decalogue,† and divers other laws and precepts formerly given, though not without some variations, with the addition of some new laws on various subjects, and explanations of the old, exhorting them to a strict observation of them, promising they should soon enter the land of Canaan, and commanding them to destroy all the idols of the inhabitants of the country, and to extirpate the people. He encouraged them to be faithful to God, assuring them that if they kept his commandments they should have blessings heaped upon them; and threatening them with all manner of calamities, if they departed from them. He renewed the covenant with the people in the name of the Lord; commanded them with a loud voice to proclaim on the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, beyond Jordan, blessings to those who kept the Covenant, and curses to all those who broke it, and to erect an altar in the land of Canaan, on which they should write the terms and conditions of their covenant with God. These things, with rehearsals sometimes of their fathers', and their own, prevarications,‡ Moses not only delivered to the people by word of mouth, but wrote them in a book; which he committed to the custody and care of the Levites, with direction from the Lord, that they should put it into the side of the ark, to be kept there for a witness against Israel, if they should rebel. Besides this, Moses, by the

\* *All.* See from Deut. i. to iv.† *Decalogue.* Ibid. *cb.* v.‡ *Prevarications.* Ibid. See from *cb.* iv. to *cb.* xxxi.



immediate direction of God, composed a song,\* in which are at large described the many benefits and favours of God to his people, their ingratitude to, and forgetfulness of him; the punishments by which he corrected them, with threatenings of greater judgments if they persisted to provoke him by a repetition of their follies. This song Moses recited to the people, and gave order that they should learn it, and repeat it frequently; that when for their transgressing the Law, many calamities and troubles should befall them, this song might be a witness for God against them.

The time was just now approaching, and the people ready to pass over Jordan; but the Lord having before told Moses, that he should not conduct the people into the promised land, because of his error at the waters of Meribah, he bid him now get him up into the mountain Abarim unto the mount Nebo in the land of Moab, opposite Jericho, and take a view of the land of Canaan, and then die there on that Mount, as his brother Aaron had died on Mount Hor.

Moses had before endeavoured to deprecate one part of his sentence, his not being permitted to enter into the promised land, but in vain; he therefore now humbly submits to the pleasure of God, and takes a solemn farewell of the people in a prophetic blessing, which he pronounced upon each tribe, as Jacob had done just before his death. And having before, by God's command, appointed Joshua to be his successor, to conduct the people to the promised land, laying his hands upon him in such a solemn and public manner, as gave all the people to understand, that after his death Joshua was to be their leader, Moses went up to the top of Pisgah over against Jericho, from whence, as the Lord had promised, he could take a full view of the countries round about.

Though his end was just approaching, and he an hundred and twenty years old, yet he was in such good health and full strength, that neither was his eye dim, nor his

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\* *Song.* Ibid. *cb.* xxxii.

natural force abated;\* therefore, while these lasted, he with pleasure surveys the beauteous prospect. He views the delightful town and plains of Jericho; sees Lebanon's fair cliffs and lofty cedars, and then resigns his soul into the hands of angels, who waited to convey him to a happier Canaan than what he had just before surveyed.

The Lord, who knew the wanton inclination of the Israelites to idolatry, lest they should pay any superstitious adoration to his remains after death, paid the funeral honours to this great prophet himself, and in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-Peor, buried him so secretly, that no man ever knew where his sepulchre was. And though he had no public monument or tomb-stone erected, yet this stands as an honourable epitaph on him recorded in holy Scripture, Deut. xxxiv. 10, 11, 12.

What prophet by the sacred breath inspir'd,  
 What friend of God with holy raptures fir'd,  
 Whose deathless name can equal glories share,  
 Or with God's servant Moses can compare?  
 With mortal eyes th' Invisible he saw,  
 On trembling Sinai's top received the Law:  
 From Egypt's fetters ransom'd Israel brought,  
 And in their sight great signs and mighty wonders wrought.

Thus died that illustrious prophet Moses; whose death, when the children of Israel understood, they lamented with great solemnity, weeping and mourning for him in the plains of Moab thirty days.

THUS far the sacred history was of Moses' inditing, which contains the five first books of the Bible, and is thence called the Pentateuch. All antiquity, both sacred

\* *Abated.* The extraordinary activity and zeal of Moses cannot be too much admired. Those lively and pious exhortations which abound in the book of Deuteronomy were delivered during the last month of his life. What a bright example does this afford, especially to the ministers of the Gospel, to be unwearied in their exertions for the glory of God, even after they have received intimations that the time of their departure is at hand.

and profane, acknowledge Moses to have been the legislator of the Jews ; and that whole nation has always carefully preserved his books, as containing their law.

When the tribes were divided into two kingdoms, both of them preserved the same respect for those books, as being written by him. The Samaritans, who came afterwards, received them from the Israelite priests ; the Jews carried them to Babylon, when they were led captives thither ; they brought them back, and afterwards revised and corrected them. Profane authors have spoken of them, as written by Moses. In short, it is as certain, that they were written by Moses, as those which are ascribed to Herodotus, Thucydides, and Cæsar, appertain to those whose names they bear. It is possible there may have been some slight additions and alterations made in them ; but the bulk of the history and the laws could not be altered.

As to the truth of the history we have several proofs.

1. It is the most ancient in the world ; for whether Moses was contemporary with Inachus the first king of Argos, who lived six hundred years before the war of Troy ; or whether he did not live till the time of Cecrops, king of Athens, who reigned three hundred years before that war, it is certain he is much more ancient than Homer, Hesiod, or any profane writer.
2. Moses is the only person that has given a plain and historical account of the origin of the world, and who has continued that history uniformly, and without any interruption to his own time. All that others have written of the first ages is, as they own themselves, mere ignorance, darkness, and fable.
3. Moses wrote at a time, when he could be sure of the truth of what he wrote, and when it might have been easy to have convicted him of falsehood, had he delivered any fables.
4. We have nothing in ancient history, nor in fable, to prove that the world is older than Moses represents it.
5. His history agrees with the profane historians of several nations. We there find the original of several nations, and their ancient names which many of them have still preserved. But if religion did not convince us, that the books of Moses were written by divine inspiration, yet

reason ought to persuade us that his history is true, and the only one wherein we can learn when the world began, and how long it has lasted. As for the last chapter of Deuteronomy, it was undoubtedly written by Joshua, as a preparation to his history, and could not be supposed to be written by Moses, as giving an account of his own death.

The five books of Moses contain the history of the Jewish people and their immediate ancestors from Adam, for the space of 2553 years. The style of his writings, and the matters of which they treat, are equally singular, interesting, and admirable; and in one particular he differs from every other legislator; for while others are contented with the honour of giving laws, Moses delivers the reasons on which those laws are founded, and derives them immediately from the Almighty. Nor, amidst the blaze of his sublime descriptions, and his ardent zeal for the honour of God, has he forgotten to record his own failings and imperfections, with a degree of humility as rare as it is honourable. His writings, and the concurrent testimonies of all ages, deservedly place him as the first of Prophets, Historians, Lawgivers, and Poets: and though much of what he wrote was wrapt up in the obscurity of types and shadows, yet it was intended to lead the people of God to the knowledge of the Redeemer. Hence our Lord says to the Jews, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me."

No prophet, beside Moses, had the honour of saying, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken." This has been fully accomplished in Jesus of Nazareth, to whom therefore we ought to give ear. And we ought to remember the declaration of the New Testament, that "if he that despised Moses' law died without mercy, of how much worse punishment shall he be thought worthy, who shall refuse to hear Him that speaketh from heaven?"



A  
COMPLETE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
**Holy Bible.**

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*BOOK THE THIRD.*

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**U**PON the death of Moses, Joshua, by the command of God, undertakes the charge of the children of Israel. He had been prime minister to Moses for the greatest part of those forty years, in which the Israelites had wandered in the Wilderness; had seen the wonderful works God wrought by Moses; understood well the nature and disposition of the people; was one of the twelve spies who were sent to search the promised land, and one of the two who gave a just report of it, in opposition to the other ten who gave an evil and false account of it. For these and other qualifications, he was formally installed into his office with very solemn ceremonies; Moses having, by God's command, presented him before Eleazer the priest, laid his hand upon him, and imparted to him some\* of the honour that was upon himself, in the sight of the whole congregation.

Being now ready to enter and take possession of the promised land, God, for the greater encouragement of Joshua, confirmed and enlarged his former commission, by giving him a more immediate and express command, as he had before done to his servant Moses, to conduct

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\* *Some, &c. See Numb. xxvii. 20.*

the people over Jordan ; telling him, that every place upon which the sole of their foot should tread, should be their own ; and assuring him that no man should be able to stand before him all the days of his life : for as he had been with Moses, so he would be with him, and never fail nor forsake him : therefore he commanded him to be strong and of good courage, for he should divide the land for an inheritance to the people. And to engage him to a performance of the Law which he had delivered to Moses, he annexes a continual series of prosperity and success ; charging him to make it his study day and night, as the standard of all his future actions, and repeating the former assurance of his presence with him wheresoever he should go.

Joshua, thus encouraged, prepares to execute the command of the Lord ; and that nothing material might be omitted, he orders the officers to go through the camp, and give notice to the people, that within three days they should pass the river Jordan, in order to possess the land which the Lord their God had given them, and that they should furnish themselves with provisions for such a march.

The city of Jericho was just opposite to the place where they were to pass. Joshua, therefore, before\* his order for their making provision for this march, sent two spies thither, to observe the situation and strength of the place, and the avenues to it ; because it would be the first place they were to attack, after they had passed the

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\* *Before.* This direction for marching is mentioned in the text, before the sending of the spies to Jericho. See Josh. i. 11. and *cb.* ii. 1. But it seems the spies were sent before that, and returned to the camp at Shittim, before their march towards Jordan : for the spies spent longer time in their search, than was between the notice given for marching, and the march itself, which was but three days : whereas they lay hid three days in the mountains for their safety, beside the time they spent in Jericho, and in going and returning ; which they could not have done, had they been sent away before the order for marching was given. So that what is delivered in the second chapter of Joshua, should in order of time come in about the middle of the first chapter, between the ninth and tenth verses, being, as Junius and Tremellius observe, displaced by a figure called *Hyperbaton*.

river. These spies\* entering Jericho, went to a public house of entertainment, which was kept by Rahab,† and there took up their lodging. But being observed by some to go in there, information was presently given to the king of Jericho, that two Israelites were come to search the country. Upon this, the king sent to Rahab to produce them; but she, having timely notice, had hid them upon the roof‡ of the house, under the stalks of flax which she had spread there. Having thus secured the men, she put off the king's messengers with a feigned story, pretending that some men did come to her house, but she knew not who they were, nor whence they came; and that when it grew dark, before the gates were shut, they went out, but she knew not whither. And to prevent any further suspicion, she advised an immediate pursuit of them, for they could not be far off. Upon this they sent out several persons to take them, who went as far as the fords of Jordan, but in vain.

When they were gone, Rahab went up to the men she had hidden, and thus accosts them: "I know the Lord hath given you this land, and the fame of you is become so terrible to us, that our people are utterly discouraged. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you to pass over, when ye came out of Egypt; and how ye subdued Sihon and"

\* *Spies.* These spies are fabulously supposed by the Rabbins to be Phineas and Caleb; which is very improbable. For Phineas was designed by God to be a priest, and Caleb a man in great authority. But Josh. vi. 23, positively states that they were young men.

† *Rahab.* It is generally thought that she was an hostess, a keeper of an inn, and that this is the true signification of the original word; though St. Jerome and others understand it of a prostitute; but there is no reason to think she was a woman of that character; had she been so, it is not likely that Salmon, a prince of the tribe of Judah, would have taken her to wife.

‡ *Roof.* The roofs of houses were then built flat, so that they could walk upon them, and set their goods there, having battlements round them to secure them from falling off, Deut. xxii. 8. And such a roof it was that David afterwards walked upon when he unhappily noticed Bathsheba.

“Og, the two Amorite kings, on the other side of Jordan. “These actions have flashed terror amongst our people, “and quite dispirited them. Your God is the only God “in heaven and earth. Now, therefore, in regard of the “service I have done in concealing you, shew favour to “me and my family, when you come into power, and “save us alive; and of this ye shall give me some assurance.” They readily promised, upon their lives, to secure her and all that belonged to her; upon which she let them down by a cord from the window which faced the country, for her house stood on the town wall. When they had descended, she advised them immediately to make to the neighbouring mountains, and there to conceal themselves for three days, till their pursuers should give over the search. The spies, perceiving the sincerity of the woman, in consulting their security, resolved to make her easy in their promise to her; and for a token of their integrity in the performance of it, give her this farther assurance. When she should see the Israelitish army approach the town, they bid her be sure to tie a scarlet cord in the window, through which she let them down; and to bring her father, mother, brethren, and all her family home to her house, and be careful to keep them within doors, that when their forces should enter the town, by this token they might distinguish the house and spare them. And that if any should straggle from the house, their blood should be upon their own heads; but if any one in the house should come to any damage, they would answer for it. To these terms she gladly agreed, and so dismissed them.

The spies having hitherto thus happily succeeded, take Rahab's advice, and make the best of their way to the mountains, where they lay concealed three days; in which time, those who went in pursuit of them, despairing to find them, returned to Jericho; and the spies, descending from the mountains, ford the river, arrive safely in the Israelitish camp, and give Joshua, their general, a faithful account of their expedition; adding, that, unquestionably the Lord had delivered the country into their



hands, for the people were utterly dispirited at the fame of them.

Joshua, roused at this news, decamps from Shittim, and approaches the river Jordan : then, reminding the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, of the agreement made between them and Moses, that they, leaving their families and cattle on this side the river, should, with their best forces, go over armed before their brethren, to assist in subduing their enemies, and placing them in their possessions, they acknowledge the agreement, and declare their readiness to go ; promising in all things to be subject to him their general, as they had been to Moses, and in all things to obey his commands, under penalty of death.

The army being provided with necessaries for their march, the officers, going through the host, commanded the people, that when they should see the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord their God, and the priests of the Levites bearing it, then they should move and follow it, that they might know the way by which they were to go, because they had never before passed that way. And that order might be observed in their march, direction was given, that they should leave a space of about two thousand\* cubits between the ark and the people.

Things being thus disposed, Joshua, early in the morning, on the ninth day of the first month, exhorted the people to sanctify themselves, because the Lord would on the next day, do wonders amongst them ; and giving order for the priests to move, they took up the ark, and

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\* *Two thousand.* There were two thousand cubits between the Ark and the camp when they marched, Josh. iii. 4. and in all probability the same proportion was observed when they rested : this distance of ground some interpret to be one mile, some two ; some measuring it according to a less, others according to a longer cubit, which they term a geometrical cubit. But all agree in this, that these two thousand cubits were a sabbath-day's journey ; because on the sabbath-day they were all to repair to the place of God's public worship, which was two thousand cubits distant from those who encamped nearest.

marched with it, before the people, to the banks of Jordan, where they halted : here the Lord assured Joshua, that he would so distinguish him in the sight of all Israel, that they should know his presence should be with him, as it had been with Moses. He directed him to tell the priests, who were to carry the ark, to halt on the brink of the river, which they accordingly did; and Joshua thereupon calling the people together to hear the words of the Lord their God, told them, That they should hereby know that the living God was among them, and that he would drive out the nations before them : for the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the Earth passing into the river Jordan before them, as soon as the feet of the priests that bare it should touch the waters, they should divide and stand as an heap. Accordingly, the priests march into the river with the ark, and stopping in the midst of it, they stood on firm ground, the rapid stream dividing, and the waters, forgetting their fluidity, condense in heaps to afford them a dry passage. Thus did God make good his word to Joshua, in promising to magnify him in the sight of the people, by dividing the waters of Jordan, as he had done before to Moses, when the Israelites passed the Red Sea.

But before the people crossed the river, the Lord commanded Joshua to select twelve men, one out of each tribe, who, as soon as the people had passed the river, were to take up twelve stones from the place where the priests stood on dry ground, according to the number of the twelve tribes, and to set them up as a memorial of this great miracle in that place. He commanded them likewise to take other twelve stones, and to carry them on shore, for another memorial of the same miracle.

The priests who carried the ark walking on dry ground to the midst of Jordan, and halting there, as Joshua had ordered them, he commanded the rest of the people to follow, forty thousand of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, well armed, leading the van. When they were all safely arrived on the other side of the river, the general commanded the priests who bare the ark, which stood in the midst of Jordan till all

the people had passed over, to come out of the river with it; which they had no sooner done than the waters returned to their natural channel, and overflowed the banks as they usually did.

The Israelites, having thus securely passed Jordan on the tenth day of the first month; encamped in a place called afterwards Gilgal, which was in the east border of Jericho. Here Joshua erected the twelve stones, which the twelve men had brought out of Jordan, as a monument to posterity, that when the descendants of the Israelites in future times, should ask the reason of it, they might know, that the Lord their God had dried up the waters of Jordan, and caused his people Israel to pass that river on dry land, as he had formerly dried up the Red Sea for their passage out of Egypt; and that all the people of the earth might be sensible of the omnipotency of the mighty God of Israel.

The fame of this miracle soon spread through the neighbouring countries, and struck the inhabitants with astonishment and terror; for when the kings of the Amorites, who were on the west of Jordan, and the kings of the Canaanites, who inhabited the sea coast, heard that the Lord had miraculously conveyed his people over the river by dividing the waters, their hearts sunk for fear, and their courage entirely failed them.

Joshua having thus conducted the Israelites through the river, God commanded him to cause them all to be circumcised: \* which being done, the Lord said to Joshua,

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\* *Circumcised.* The great goodness as well as wisdom of God was very conspicuous in this act of circumcision after the Israelites were safe on the other side of Jordan; for their miraculous passage through that river, and the fame of former miracles wrought by God in their favour had so affected the neighbouring nations with fear, that they dare not offer the least opposition to Israel in their passage. But now that they were safe on the other side of the river, God had a work to do upon his people, which would render them for a while not only unable to assault their enemies, but even to defend themselves. For during their travel in the wilderness, circumcision had been omitted; not, it is supposed, through a neglect of that ordinance; but being, or at least expecting to be, always upon the march, they thought it unsafe to expose themselves to the hardship of it; and all

“ This day I have taken away the shame\* of Egypt from “ you.” And from this act of circumcision, the place where it was done was then called Gilgal.† Here the Israelites tarried till their circumcision wounds were healed ; and here it was they kept the Passover,‡ on the fourteenth day of the first month, in the evening. Now did the Israelites begin to enjoy the good of the land ; the delicious products of the promised inheritance : for on the next day after the Passover they ate of the corn, and there being plenty of all fruits, on the morrow the Manna was withdrawn.

All things being ready for approaching the city of Jericho, Joshua gives the word, and the army marches

they who were men, when they came out of Egypt, and had been circumcised there, being dead, (Joshua and Caleb only excepted) most of the present generation being such as had been born within the forty years of their travel in the wilderness, had not been circumcised hitherto. Therefore now that they had passed over Jordan, and were ready to take possession of the promised land, and the inhabitants of it under a general consternation having shut themselves up in Jericho, the Lord commanded Joshua to prepare for the circumcision of the people.

\* *Shame.* This shame might be either the reproachful diffidence of the Egyptians, who would not believe that the Lord would make good his promise in bringing his people into the promised land ; (which Moses often hinted, when he addressed himself to God in behalf of the people, to deprecate God’s anger from them, urging that their enemies from thence would take occasion to ridicule and question his omnipotence ; ) or, remaining uncircumcised, they were like the Egyptians and other idolatrous nations.

† *Gilgal.* Or *Galgal*, which signifies removing, rolling, or taking away. This word is used before in Josh. iv. 19. and in Deut. xi. 30. but it was in either place only by way of anticipation. This place is called by St. Jerome *Golyal*, a famous city, formerly about fifty furlongs from Jordan, and ten from Jericho in the straight road thither.

‡ *Passover.* This was the third Passover the Israelites celebrated. The First the day before they came out of Egypt, Exod. xii. The Second was the year after, upon their receiving the Law, and setting up the tabernacle in Sinai, Numb. ix. 2. The Third was this in the Holy Land, in the plains of Jericho, Josh. v. 10.



towards it. The place was strong, well provided, and full of inhabitants who had retired into it, and seemed resolved to make a brave defence. Joshua therefore undertakes to view the place by himself, to find out the most advantageous approaches to it. While he was making his observations, there appeared the awful form of a man, but with a lustre in his face that bespoke him more than mortal. In his hand he held a flaming sword, and his whole appearance far surpassed any thing of human nature. The Israelitish general advances to this great unknown, with a courage becoming his character, and boldly demands, who he is for? He answers, For Israel, of whose army and people he was the guardian. At these words the general falls prostrate, and waits the command of his Lord, who bids him loose his sandals, and not profane the holy place with irreverent approaches.\* Joshua obeys, and receives new orders for the better management of the siege of Jericho: He was to cause all the forces to march round the place six days successively, and that on the seventh day the priests should take the seven trumpets made of rams' horns, which were used to proclaim the Jubilee† year; that they should go before the ark,

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\* *Approaches.* This great personage who appeared in a human form, was no other (as Bishop Patrick judges, with the ancient Fathers) than the Son of God, the eternal Word, who frequently, before his incarnation, thus manifested himself to his favoured servants, and, on this important occasion, in a military style.

By the act of adoration and the title of Lord, given to him by Joshua, it is plain that this illustrious person, the Guardian or Captain of the Lord's Host, was Christ, the Son of God, who was pleased in this manner to appear to Joshua, both to encourage and direct him. Wherefore, having first bid Joshua (as Moses was bid at the burning bush, Exod. iii. 5.) to put off his shoes, because the place whereon he stood was holy, (which confirms that it was Christ, whose presence consecrates every place, where he appears) and Joshua having obeyed, *cb. v. 13, 14, 15.* the Lord said, *cb. vi. 2.* "See I have given into thy hands Jericho, and the king thereof, with the mighty men of valour;" and instructed him in what manner he should besiege the city, and shew how he should take it, *cb. vi. 2, &c.*

† *Jubilee.* This word is derived from the Hebrew word *Jobel*, which signifies a ram, and also a ram's horn, as here in Josh. vi. 4. where the word *Jobelim* is used and expounded by the Chaldee paraphrast, *rams' horns.*

and round the city, and when the trumpets sounded first loud, and then low, the people should all give a shout, for then the walls of the city should fall, and every man should march in at the place which was directly before him.

Having encircled the city six days, as they were commanded, on the seventh, by break of day, they encompassed it seven times, and at the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, the General said to the people, "Shout! for the Lord hath given you the city." On which the people gave a shout, and immediately the wall of the city fell down; so that the army marched directly up to it, and took it, putting all to the sword, both man and beast, old and young: only Rahab, and those in her house were saved alive; for Joshua had given a strict charge before-hand to the two spies (whom she had formerly concealed) to take care, when the town should be taken, to go to her house, and bring out her family in discharge of their oath to her: which they accordingly did, and left her, with all her kindred and substance safe without\* the camp of Israel. Then setting fire to the city they destroyed every thing in it, except the silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron; which were put into the treasury of the house of the Lord, as it had been commanded. And lest any one should attempt to rebuild this city, Joshua published this prophetic imprecation on the bold undertaker; "That he should lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son:" By which he meant that it should be the ruin† of his family.

Before the city was taken, Joshua had cautioned the people not to spare any thing that was in it, but to destroy

\* *Without*, &c. Being aliens, or heathens, they were not permitted to come within the camp, till they were proselyted, or at least legally purified.

† *Ruin*. This was exactly fulfilled in Hiel the Bethelite; who in the days of Ahab king of Israel (above five hundred years after) began to rebuild Jericho with the loss of his eldest son Abiram, and finished it with the loss of Segub his youngest son, 1 Kings xvi. 34.

all that lay in their way, except silver, gold, brass, and iron; which were to be consecrated to the Lord. And therefore he warned them not to meddle with any thing, for fear of bringing a curse, not only upon themselves, but upon all the nation of the Israelites.

Notwithstanding the strict charge of Joshua against meddling with any thing that was devoted to this general destruction, or consecrated to the Lord, yet so prevailing was the sacrilegious thirst of gold, that one of the tribe of Judah, whose name was Achan, contrary to the command of the General, took a portion of the spoil of each sort, and hid it. This proved of ill consequence to Israel at large, and was discovered on the following occasion. Joshua, being desirous to take a little city named Ai, near Bethaven, to the east of Bethel, and knowing that it was neither populous nor well defended, detached a body of three thousand men only, to go and attack it; who no sooner approach the town, than the inhabitants sally out, repulse them, and drive them back to the camp; whither those that escaped returned in such consternation, that they diffused a general terror throughout the whole army.

This defeat so much afflicted Joshua, that rending his clothes, and prostrating himself before the Ark of the Lord, he lay there till the evening, both he and the elders, in token of extreme sorrow\* and humiliation, sprinkling dust on their reverend heads. But Joshua, being wholly ignorant of the offence, and desirous to know what had provoked God to desert his people, in an humble expostulation thus complains to him. “Wherefore, O Lord God, hast thou brought this people over Jordan to deliver them into the hands of the Amorites to destroy them? We had been happy, hadst thou permitted us to have dwelt on the other side of Jordan. What shall I say, when Israel turn their backs upon their enemies? For when the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of this land shall hear of this, they will surround us, and cut us off, and what will become of thy honour?”

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\* *Sorrow.* See 1 Sam. iv. 11. Nehem. ix. 1.

The Lord, not willing to let his servant Joshua languish under the melancholy thought of being deserted by him, tells him there is a latent cause of his displeasure among the people—That some of them had taken of the accursed\* thing, and also of those things which were devoted to the Lord, and pretending that they had brought it all into the treasury of God, had concealed it for their own private use: and to put him in a way to clear the camp of the accursed thing which had brought this judgment upon them, the Lord commanded Joshua to proclaim among the people; “There is an accursed thing “in the midst of thee, O Israel: ye cannot stand before “your enemies, until ye have removed the accursed thing “from among you.”

The Lord then directed Joshua how he should detect the offender; and when he was found and convicted, how he should be punished. Early next morning the tribes were all summoned before the Lord; and the lot being cast upon the tribes, the tribe of Judah was found to be that to whom the guilty person belonged. Then, proceeding

\* *Accursed.* That is, of that which was devoted to destruction. Our old translation renders it in Joshua vi. 17, 18. *execrable thing*; and in *cb.* vii. 11, 12. *excommunicate thing*; which are synonymous terms. In which places the distinction of the spoil is plainly expressed. All the inhabitants of Jericho, except Rahab and her family, with their effects of all sorts, were to be destroyed; only gold, silver, brass and iron, were to be consecrated to the Lord. These are by the Septuagint called *holy*, because they were to be laid up in the treasury for the service of the Tabernacle; but all the rest was profane, and ordered to be destroyed. The Septuagint keep to the word *Anathema* in the aforesaid text, which signifies separated or accursed, and implies that the profane spoil was not to be mixed with what was holy. In the same sense is the word *Anathema* used in the New Testament, particularly by St. Paul, who pronounces offenders *Anathema*, separated from God, that is, accursed; which is the old word for excommunication, in the most early ages of the church.

In this instance it is observable, That though it was but one man that was actually guilty; yet the guilt was charged upon the whole people, and they felt the effects thereof; till they had convicted and punished the offender. How great then is the guilt of nations in general, where sins are epidemical, and repeated from age to age?



by lot, from tribe to family, from family to household, and thence to particular persons, the lot fell at last upon Achan. Having thus happily discovered the person, Joshua, like a prudent judge, with great mildness examines the criminal, and brought him to this confession: "I have sinned  
 " against the Lord God of Israel, for when I saw among  
 " the spoil a royal\* garment, and two hundred shekels  
 " of silver, with a wedge† of gold of fifty shekels weight,  
 " my covetousness prompted me to take them; which  
 " I did, and hid them in the earth in the midst of my  
 " tent."

Joshua, for his more evident conviction, sent messengers to Achan's tent; who, finding the things hidden as he confessed, brought them to the assembly, and laid them before the Lord. And now, Achan being duly convicted by his own confession and the notoriousness of the fact, Joshua proceeded to execution by the express‡ command of God; which was thus: They take Achan, with the garments, the money, and the wedge of gold, as evidences of his guilt, and with him his sons,§ his daughters, his cattle, his tent, and all his moveables, and brought them into the valley of Achor, (which from him took its name, signifying *Trouble*) where he and his family being first stoned, were afterwards burned. And to perpetuate the memory of this for a warning to others, they raised a great heap of stones over them.

\* *Royal.* This is rendered *Babylonish*, supposed to be such a rich garment as the kings of Babylon formerly wore. The Hebrews call it *Sinbar*, that is *Babylonish*; for Babylon was in the land of Shinar, Gen. xi. 2. Thence the Latins render it *pallium coccineum*, a scarlet cloak. The Greeks render it *stoleen poikileen*, a garment of state of divers colours. But this variety of versions all agree in this, that it was a rich garment.

† *Wedge.* This was made in the form of a tongue, and for that reason is not improperly sometimes called a *tongue of gold*.

‡ *Express.* See Josh. vii. 15.

§ *Sons, &c.* This judgment only appertains to God, and to whom he will reveal it. To man he hath expressly commanded, not to punish the fathers for the children, nor the children for the fathers' sake, but that every one should be put to death for his own sin, Deut. xxiv. 16.

The wrath of God being appeased by this execution, he encourages Joshua to attack Ai afresh, assuring him that he had given the king of Ai, and all his people and country into his hand; and that he should do to them as he had done to Jericho and her king; only, for the encouragement of the soldiers, he allowed them the plunder of the city, and the cattle for themselves; giving Joshua particular instructions\* to lay a party of men in ambuscade† behind the city.

In order to this action, Joshua selected thirty thousand men, out of whom he appointed five thousand to secrete themselves between Bethel and Ai, who, upon the signal that he should give them, which was by holding up a spear with a banner upon it, should enter the city, and set it on fire; himself having first, by another stratagem, drawn all the forces out of the town to pursue him in his pretended retreat.

The ambuscade being laid as he had directed, he drew up the army before the north part of the city of Ai, and towards night he marched into the valley, in sight of the enemy, to tempt them to sally out upon him. This succeeded as Joshua desired; for the king of Ai, thinking them now entirely in his power, drew out his whole army, early in the succeeding morning, to give them battle. Israel, at the very first onset, gave way and retreated. This so animated the king of Ai's army, that, concluding the Israelites fled indeed through fear of them, they called out all the citizens to assist in the pursuit, which they eagerly did, leaving the town naked and defenceless. But this confidence of victory cost them dear; for when Joshua, by his sham retreat, had drawn them to a considerable distance from Ai, he gave the signal to the ambuscade, who immediately enter the city, and set it

\* *Instructions.* God would not destroy Ai by a miracle, as he had done Jericho, because he chose to make his people formidable for their power and policy to other nations with whom they were afterwards to engage.

† *Ambuscade.* This is the first ambuscade we read of in history.

on fire. When Joshua, by the rising smoke, perceived that his soldiers had made themselves masters of the town, he faced about and charged the enemy, who, not in the least expecting the Israelites to rally, began to think of retiring to the city; but when they saw their city in flames, they were so dispirited that they had no power to fight or fly. In the mean time the ambuscade having performed their orders in burning the city, fell upon the rear of the king of Ai's dismayed forces, which, being thus encompassed, were cut to pieces.

Joshua having thus gained a complete victory, marched to Ai, and put all he found in it to the sword: so that the number of slain on that day amounted to twelve thousand men and women. The cattle and spoil of the city were given to the soldiers, who burned the city, and made it a heap of ruins. As for the king of Ai, he was taken prisoner in the fight; and being brought before the general, he was by his command hanged on a tree till sun-set;\* at which time he was taken down, and buried under a great heap of stones at the entrance of the gate of the city.

Joshua, having thus happily succeeded in this action against Ai, in token of gratitude to the great Giver of victory erected an altar to Him in mount Ebal, as the Lord had, by Moses,† before commanded, on which he offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings: and then he not only read to the people, both Israelites and strangers, the words of the Law given by Moses, but wrote also, upon great stones, a copy‡ of the Law which Moses had written.

The fame of the Israelites in their successful attack on Jericho and Ai, and the terrible slaughter of the inhabitants, alarmed all the kings on that side Jordan; who consulting the common security, confederated together, en-

\* *Sun-set.* This was in pursuance of the Law. See Deut. xxi. 22, 23.

† *Moses.* See Exod. xx. 25. and Deut. xxvii. 5.

‡ *Copy.* It is no great difficulty to apprehend how many of the gentile nations came to imitate the Jews in many of their religious observances and rites, since the Mosaic Law was so publicly exposed to the sight of all.

tering into a league for their mutual defence. But the Gibeonites, who were more deeply affected with the rumour of the Israelites' courage and power, distrusting a confederated force against so great and numerous a people who were so well skilled in the art of war, had recourse to a stratagem, to preserve themselves from the general destruction which they plainly perceived hung over their heads. They chose a certain number of their men, who were instructed to feign themselves to be ambassadors travelling from a distant country to treat for peace, and enter into a league with Israel. And to persuade them into a belief of the great distance from whence they came, they dressed themselves in old clothes, with old clouted shoes on their feet, and put dry mouldy bread into old sacks, and wine into old bottles.\* Thus accoutred, they came to the Israelitish camp at Gilgal, and presenting themselves before the general, told him they were come from a far country, and desired to enter into a league with Israel.

The people, at first, suspected these ambassadors, and intimated, that perhaps they possessed part of that land which God had given them; and if so, they could not make a peace with them. And Joshua put the question directly to them, asking them who they were, and from whence they came? To which they artfully but deceitfully replied, "From a far country are we come, where we have heard of the fame of the Lord thy God; of all that he did for thee in Egypt, and to Sihon and Og the Amorite kings. Wherefore our Governors ordered us to take provision for our journey, and assure you that we are your servants, and desire to be in amity with you." Then producing their mouldy bread, their torn bottles, and their old clothes and shoes, they assured them that they took the bread hot out of their houses when they came from home; that their bottles were then new;

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\* *Old Bottles.* These bottles were not of glass or earth, as those in use among us; but were made of leather, in which they formerly, and now in some countries, kept their wine.



and that their garments and shoes were become old by reason of the length of their journey.

The Israelites in this suffered themselves to be outwitted; for they had a sure way to have known the whole truth of this matter: but neglecting to ask counsel at the mouth of the Lord, they suffered themselves to be imposed upon by the seeming simplicity of the subtle Gibeonites. This stratagem of theirs had its desired effect: The credulous Israelites believe the plausible story of the Gibeonites, confirmed sufficiently, as they thought, by ocular demonstration: so that without any further hesitation, they received them into their alliance, Joshua making peace with them to preserve their lives, and the princes of the congregation swearing solemnly to observe it. But within three days this cheat was discovered; and they who pretended to come from a distant country, proved to be their neighbours, who inhabited a part of that land which God had given Israel to possess.

When the Israelites found their new allies had put a trick upon them, and what noble plunder the rich cities of the Gibeonites would have afforded them, they could not forbear mutinying against the princes who had sworn to observe the league; which they perceiving, endeavoured to pacify them by urging the necessity they were under of keeping their oath, lest they should incur the divine displeasure; and that though the alliance extended to the saving their lives, yet it did not exempt them from tribute or service, from which they might reap considerable advantages, intending to make them hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for the use of all the congregation. This being approved, appeased the people; and Joshua calling for the Gibeonites, expostulates the matter with them for thus imposing upon and deceiving them. They in excuse answered, that they were sensible God had given them all the land where they dwelt, and commanded them to kill all the inhabitants; and that they had made use of this stratagem to save their lives.

They did, indeed, save their lives by this trick, but were condemned to perpetual bondage, and Joshua himself

pronounced this sentence against them; “ Now therefore are ye cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, even hewers of wood and drawers of water, for the house\* of my God.” The Gibeonites, rejoicing in the preservation of their lives, gladly submitted to this humiliating sentence, and replied, “ Behold we are in thy hand, do to us what thou wilt.” Thus Joshua delivered the Gibeonites from the fury of the Israelites, who would have put them all to the sword. But though they had by this policy saved their lives with the loss of their liberty; yet their neighbours the Amorites put them in fresh danger of losing them: for deserting the common interest, and making a separate league with Israel for themselves, they resolved to take revenge of them. Accordingly Adonizedeck king of Jebus,† taking with him four neighbouring kings, Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, with their united forces they encamp before Gibeon. The Gibeonites, not daring to trust to the strength of their city against so potent and confederated a force, dispatch messengers to their new and great allies at their camp in Gilgal, to acquaint them that the kings of the Amorites who dwelt in the mountains had armed against them, and to intreat them to march immediately to their relief. Joshua was bound in honour and interest to succour them; to which God himself gave particular encouragement, assuring him of victory. Upon which Joshua, by a forced march, came up with them by night, and surprised them early in the morning. The action was severe for a time, but they were soon put to flight; and as they fled, a storm of hail overtook them, which fell with such violence upon them, that more were destroyed by the hailstones than by the sword. The five confederate kings escaping the storm of hail, in their

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\* *House*. From the Gibeonites being thus given or dedicated to the service of the tabernacle, and of all the congregation, their posterity, after the building of the temple, were called *Netbinims*, (that is *given*) in 1 Chron. ix. 2. and often so in other places.

† *Jebus*. This place was afterwards, in David's time, called Jerusalem.

flight made to a cave in a place called Makkedah, and there secreted themselves from the pursuit of the enemy: but Joshua, having intelligence of their concealment, ordered the cave to be blocked up, and set a guard upon it to prevent their escape; commanding the rest of the army to continue the pursuit, and to do execution on the enemies, lest they should retreat to any fortified place. And that they might not want time to complete their victory, Joshua, addressing himself to God in prayer received authority from him to command the sun, in the sight of Israel, to stand still, saying, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." The great machines obeyed, and stood unmoved at his command. This was a long day indeed; for never before or since did God honour man so much as to change the course of nature, and arrest the light of the rolling orbs.\*

\* *Orbs.* This miracle was so astonishingly great that the Infidels take occasion from it to discredit Revelation itself, and many writers of the Jews explain it away, by saying it only signifies the wonderful speed of Joshua in the pursuit of his enemies at the close of the day; some Christian writers have weakly countenanced this Jewish fiction.

To remove a variety of difficulties which have been started from this remarkable story, the following elucidation of the matter derived from a just interpretation of the Hebrew words used in the narration is offered to the reader.

"The place now quoted has been constantly brought as an objection against the Scripture's allowing the motion of the earth, and is insisted on as a proof, that the Scriptures assert the motion of the sun round the earth. But I conceive that this mistake arises from quoting the place imperfectly. It is usually said—Does not Joshua say, 'Sun, stand thou still?' and the next words are generally dropped: whereas it runs thus, 'Sun, stand thou still in Gibeon; and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon.' Now I ask—Was the body of the sun in Gibeon, or the body of the moon in the valley of Ajalon? Surely no: but the *light* proceeding from the sun, and the *light* reflected from the moon were both there. Joshua means, not the *bodies*, but the *lights* of the sun and moon, which were made to remain for a time in the same situation in Gibeon and Ajalon. And this was effected by a miraculous power, without making any alteration in the bodies of the sun, moon, or earth. The Hebrew words, *SHEMESH* and *YARAH*, mean the *light* of the sun and moon."

See *Pike's Philosophia Sacra*, p. 47.

It is remarkable that the ancient Chronicles of China record this wonderful phenomenon, and in almost the words of Scripture: "The Sun and Moon stood still in their places, and hastened not to go down for the space of one whole day."



Heaven thus miraculously assisting Joshua in gaining the victory, he returns from the pursuit, and ordering the cave to be opened, where the five kings lay concealed, he commanded them to be brought before him. Then calling for the officers of the army, he ordered them to set their feet upon the necks of those kings; which they did. This was not to insult over the wretched captives, but was an emblematical prediction of their future success over the enemies of God's people; for thus, says Joshua, I will do to all that oppose you. Then commanding execution to be done upon them, he caused them to be hanged upon several trees until the evening; when he ordered them to be taken down, and cast into the cave where they had hid themselves, making their intended sanctuary their sepulchre.

Joshua having thus successfully cleared the field of his enemies, the next thing he undertakes is the reducing of the cities. He marched first to Makkedah, then to Libnah; from thence to Lachish, where he slew the king of Gezar, who came to the relief of Lachish. From Lachish he marched to Eglon, from Eglon to Hebron, and from Hebron to Debir. All which places he took by storm, and put the inhabitants, both kings and people, to the sword, as God had commanded.\* Joshua having performed such great exploits, and conquered so many kings and nations in one expedition† through the assistance of the mighty God of Israel, returned with his victorious army to his camp at Gilgal.

These great successes of Israel alarmed the more distant nations especially the Hazorites, whose king, thinking it in vain for the princes of Canaan to encounter singly with so powerful and victorious an army, sends to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph, and to all the neighbouring princes within

\* Commanded. See Deut. xx. v. 16, 17.

† *One expedition.* All these great achievements are by some chronologers reckoned to have been performed in the first year of Joshua's government, and placed in the year of the world 2553. But they rather seem to have extended into, if they did not wholly take up the year 2554.



reach to invite them into a league, that with their united force they might drive the Israelites out of the land they had conquered.

These potentates, the next campaign, with an almost innumerable army, prepare to encounter Joshua; whose God, to chastise the pride and presumption of his enemies, and to encourage his general, bids him not to fear them, "For to-morrow, (says he) I will deliver them into the hand of Israel, and thou shalt disable their horses, and burn their chariots."

The confederate princes thinking themselves secure in their numbers, little thought Joshua durst look them in the face: but he, in pursuance of the encouragement and instructions God had given him, without delay takes the field, marches directly towards the enemy, and falls so suddenly upon them, that he immediately routed them, and in the pursuit put all to the sword. And because Jabin, the king of Hazor, had been the head of the confederacy, he caused that city to be burned to the ground. But all the other cities whose inhabitants were slain in the action, he left standing, and gave the cattle and plunder of them to the soldiers.

Thus did Joshua, by degrees,\* recover all the land of Canaan, subduing the people that possessed it, and slaying all their kings, thirty-one in number, with the Anakims or Giants, of whom he left none remaining, except in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. And † now Joshua began to

\* *Degrees.* These great achievements may be allowed to have taken up some years. And indeed in Josh. xi. 18. it is said, "Joshua made war a long time with all those kings." And from Caleb's words in *chap.* xiv. v. 6, and 10. where he says, it was *forty-five years* since he was sent as a spy into the land, it may reasonably be gathered, that between six and seven years were spent in this war.

† *And, &c.* The other things which are mentioned in the book of Joshua, may be supposed to have taken up the rest of Joshua's time: as the dividing the land among the nine tribes and half by lot, from *cb.* xiv. to *cb.* xix. (For the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, had their portions assigned, and given them on the other side Jordan, by Moses himself, Numb. xxxii. which is in Josh. xiii. 20, 21. repeated, and the lots described.) The setting up of the ta-

think of a settlement, which he did by dividing the land beyond Jordan among the nine tribes and a half; who being settled in their several possessions, Joshua set up the tabernacle at Shiloh. Then calling the Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh, and acknowledging that they had faithfully kept their covenant in accompanying their brethren, and helping them to subdue their enemies, he kindly dismissed them, advising them to continue stedfast in their duty to God; and giving them his blessing, they returned to their families laden with spoils, consisting of gold, brass, iron, raiment, and a great number of cattle, which was their share of the plunder taken from the enemy during the war.

These two tribes and a half, being safely arrived on the borders of Jordan, erected an altar, not for any religious use, but as a memorial to succeeding ages, that though they were separated from their brethren by the river, yet they were all of one extraction and religion, and had an equal right to the altar of the Lord at Shiloh, and the worship performed there. This circumstance had nearly proved of very serious consequence, and threatened a war between them and the other tribes; to whom the matter being either misrepresented, or they misapprehending it, and suspecting their brethren on the other side of Jordan were about to revolt from God and them, they unanimously assemble their forces at Shiloh, in order to declare war against them. But before they proceeded to extremities, they chose ten princes, one out of each tribe, who were the chiefs of their families, with Phineas and Eleazar, and sent them away to enquire the cause of this newly-erected altar.

As soon as they were come to them, they fell very roughly upon them, charging them with rebellion against

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bernae at Shiloh, *cb.* xviii. 1. the appointing cities of refuge for the manslayer, *cb.* xx. the setting out cities for the Levites, some out of each tribe, *cb.* xxi. with many other things of more particular concern, which not being historical, we have thought proper to omit in the text, and from hence refer the reader to the texts above mentioned, and what follows.

the Lord; and, to aggravate the matter, they put them in mind of the sin of Peor;\* and to let them see that it was not out of any officious, busy temper or humour, that they came to them thus, but out of a general concern for the whole people, they said, “If you thus rebel against the Lord, he will soon be angry with the whole congregation of Israel.” This they enforce by the late instance of Achan. And to prevent any objection, and take from them all pretence of excuse or defence, they add, “If ye have done this from any apprehension, that the land ye possess on that side Jordan is unclean, or less holy than ours, because the tabernacle is on our side the river, return and settle among us, where the tabernacle resteth: but by no means rebel against the Lord, nor us, in building you an altar beside the altar of the Lord.”

The Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites, were very much concerned at the ill opinion which their brethren had conceived of them; but, conscious of their perfect innocence in this matter, they, making a solemn appeal to the Searcher of hearts, return the following answer to Phineas and his companions: “The Lord God of the whole world, and all Israel, shall know how innocent we are of the rebellion with which you charge us. If we have set up an altar in opposition to the Lord’s altar, let him judge, and punish us; neither do ye shew us any favour. But when you shall know the truth, you will find what we have done was to prevent what you fear. For we considered that in time to come, your children might say unto our children, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel? For since the Lord hath made Jordan a border and bound between us and you, you have no part in the Lord; that is, you do not belong to the congregation of the Lord; nor have you any right to come before his tabernacle, nor to offer upon his altar; and so your chil-

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\* *Peor*. See Numb. xxv. for which sin of Peor, the plague was sent among the congregation.



“dren might be an occasion to our children to become  
“rebels against the Lord. Therefore we agreed to build  
“an altar, not for burnt-offering; nor for sacrifice, but to  
“be a witness between you and us, and our generations  
“after us; that when we should come to perform service  
“to the Lord with our burnt-offering and sacrifice before  
“him, if your children should say unto ours, Ye have no  
“part in the Lord; our children might reply, Behold the  
“pattern of the altar of the Lord, which our fathers made,  
“not to sacrifice upon, but to be a witness between us and  
“you. But as to the matter you charge us with, God  
“forbid that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn  
“this day from following the Lord, to build an altar for  
“burnt-offerings, meat-offerings, or sacrifices, beside the  
“altar of our God that is before his tabernacle.”

When Phineas, and the princes of the people that were with him, heard this fair and just vindication of the Reubenites and the rest, they could not forbear shewing great satisfaction, and were overjoyed at the proof of their innocence. Phineas looking upon this as a happy token of God's presence among them, testifies the same to the injured Reubenites, assuring them by this test of their loyalty to God, that he was still present with them. Then taking leave of their brethren, they return in triumph to the Israelites at Shiloh, who, with infinite pleasure and joy, receive the good tidings of their brethren's innocence, and of their pious care and zeal to preserve their posterity in the fear and service of the true God: and changing their angry thoughts of war, into those of tenderness and peace, they bless God for the happy issue of this dangerous affair. As for the Reubenites and their brethren, to prevent any future jealousy or suspicion of their intentions, they called the altar which they had built *Ed*, which signifies a witness, adding this as the reason of the name; “For it shall be a witness between us and our brethren, “the other tribes of Israel, that the Lord is God.” Intimating by this, that though they lived at a distance from the rest of their brethren, yet both had but one God, who was the God of Israel.



After this, Joshua reaped the fruits of his victories in the quiet enjoyment of peace ; and at last being grown old, and perceiving his end to be near at hand, he caused all Israel to be assembled, to whom he thus briefly enumerated the blessings that God had bestowed on their ancestors and themselves : “ Your fathers dwelt on the  
“ other side of Jordan, from whence the Lord brought  
“ Abraham his servant to this happy country, where he  
“ blessed his old age with a son, and that son with two  
“ others, Jacob and Esau. Esau possessed mount Seir ;  
“ but Jacob and his family went into Egypt ; where their  
“ posterity remained under slavish bondage till God sent  
“ Moses and Aaron to deliver them. You cannot be ig-  
“ norant of the wonders God wrought by their hands  
“ when he plagued Egypt for their sakes, nor of his care  
“ in protecting them against the Amorites. Yourselves  
“ have lately seen confederated nations fall before you,  
“ and the power of the Almighty hath always pointed  
“ out the way to an easy victory for you over all your  
“ enemies. And now, at last, he hath left you in quiet  
“ possession of a land that aboundeth with all manner of  
“ plenty ; whose happy soil, without your labour, yields  
“ the comfortable produce of all that nature can give.  
“ In recompence for all this, your great Protector and  
“ Benefactor requires only an exact obedience to his  
“ laws.” Then solemnly declaring, “ That what course  
“ soever the rest should take, he and his house would  
“ serve the Lord ;” and exhorting them to a faithful obser-  
vance of the laws of God, he invited them to renew the covenant with God. Which having done, in very ample and significant terms he wrote the words of their covenant in the book of the law of God. Then setting up a great stone under an oak by the Sanctuary of the Lord, he bid the people take notice, That that very stone should be a witness to them, to remind them of the covenant which they had made, to preserve them, at any future time, from denying their God.

Soon after this, Joshua, being arrived at the hundred and tenth year of his age, died, and was buried in the

border of his inheritance, in Timnath-Serah, in Mount Ephraim; which city, upon the division of the land amongst the tribes, the children of Israel, by God's direction,\* gave unto him, in token of gratitude for the many services and benefits they had received by his administration.† Much about the same time also, died Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, whom they buried in a hill which was given him in Mount Ephraim, and which descended to Phineas, his son, and successor in the priesthood.

\* *God's direction.* See Joshua xix. v. 49, 50.

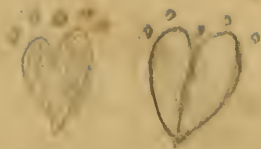
† In this remarkable history, we perceive "a beautiful representation of the faithfulness and sufficiency of the Saviour, while we observe the Israelitish General fixing and establishing his people in their inheritance. It was the purpose of God from the beginning, and had been repeatedly declared to his servants in different ages, that the descendants of Abraham should possess the kingdom of Canaan,—the land which the Lord had "espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, and which was the glory of all lands." Ezek. xx. 6. Deut. xi. 10—12. Many previous measures were taken, in order to prepare for this event, but the completion of the design was reserved for Joshua. It was he, who, in a triumphant manner, conducted the hosts of Israel into that delightful country, who assigned to the various tribes their respective portions, and saw them settled in peace and prosperity around him. Then, when the whole scheme was accomplished, they were all required to testify, that "not one thing had failed of all the good things, which the Lord their God spake concerning them." To Him, therefore, "who keepeth truth for ever," they were taught to ascribe the praise. "For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them." Psal. xlv. 3.

In these several circumstances we discover a striking resemblance of the great plan of salvation. The redeemed of the Lord shall "inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world:" For "it is their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom." Matt. xx. 34. Luke xii. 32. Much has been done in various ways to forward the gracious design; but the full performance of it is intrusted to the care of Jesus. He is "the Captain of the Lord's hosts," who stands engaged to bring them to heaven. This was the object of his counsels from the beginning, nor will he leave his scheme unfinished. For the accomplishment of his purpose, he relinquished the throne of his glory, was obedient to the law, was made a curse, died, was buried, and rose again: and, though he now reigns above, he is carrying on the same work, and, with a particular regard to it, he will continue to maintain universal dominion, "until the redemption of the purcha-

The children of Israel, as hath been said at the end of the first book, being obliged by oath to carry Joseph's bones with them when they should be delivered from the Egyptian bondage, having them still with them, now be-thought themselves of the obligation they lay under to perform the solemn charge of their venerable ancestor ; they therefore buried Joseph's bones in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob had formerly bought of the son of Hamor, the father of Shechem ; which parcel of ground afterwards became the inheritance of Joseph's posterity.

sed possession, unto the praise of his glory." Not one of his faithful followers shall fail of attaining " the promise of eternal inheritance ;" for it is " reserved in heaven for them," and they " are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." 1 Pet. i. 4, 5. His grace and truth are pledged for their present security, and for their final admission into " the joy of their Lord." They shall " sit with him in his throne, and shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. iii. 21. xxii. 5.

Canaan, we have seen, as the land of REST into which the Hebrews were conducted, typified the heavenly country, to which our expectations are raised. But how inferior, and how defective, the former, in comparison of the latter ! The rest of the Israelites was far from being complete, and was but of a short duration : and therefore one of a more excellent nature is provided for us by the Gospel. " For if Jesus (or Joshua) had given them rest, (in the full sense of the word) then would he not afterward have spoken of another day." Heb. iv. 8. But now " there remaineth a rest for the people of God :"—a rest, which may properly be called so, perfect in degree, and everlasting in continuance. How delightful the prospect ! " It doth not yet appear, what we shall be ; but we know, that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is." 1 John iii. 2.



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COMPLETE  
H I S T O R Y

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BOOK THE FOURTH.

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**T**HE Israelites,\* as yet preserving the recollection of Joshua's solemn exhortation, and being warned of the dangerous consequence of the murmuring of their forefathers, dare not undertake any thing without God's direction. And there still remaining several of the Canaanitish kings unconquered, and who might be troublesome to them, they unanimously repair to the sacred Oracle at Shiloh, to ask counsel who should go first up for them, to fight the Canaanites. The Lord gave this first post of honour to the tribe of Judah, with an assurance of victory. Whereupon they invited the tribe of Simeon, whose lot lay within theirs, to accompany them in this expedition; they promised them, if they would join

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\* *The Israelites.* After the death of Joshua, the Israelites were long without any king or sovereign. Every tribe being governed by its elders, chose its own commanders for war, and they by degrees subdued the rest of the inhabitants of the country, either destroying or making them tributaries. The neighbouring kings made war on, and sometimes subdued them; but God from time to time raised up great and eminent men, who delivered them from their oppressions. In acknowledgment for which benefit the people appointed them their Judges, that is, their supreme Magistrates, to administer justice, and to govern them.



forces with them now, they would do the like for them afterwards. Simeon agrees; and, taking the field, they both attack the cruel king of Bezek, who having fortified himself in his city, could not hold out long against victorious Israel; but seeing his heartless troops give way, quits the place, and endeavours by ignoble flight to save his life. But in vain; for the Israelites having taken the town, and put ten thousand of the people to the sword, they pursue Adonibezek the king, and having taken him, they cut off his thumbs and great toes. This execution drew from the tyrant an acknowledgment of the justice of God upon him; for he confessed he had cut off the thumbs and great toes of no less than seventy princes, whom, in this mangled condition, he obliged to gather their food, like dogs, under his table.

The ancient city Jebus,\* with its territories, lay in two parts: of which, one part fell to the lot of Judah, the other to that of Benjamin. Judah soon overrun that part of it which belonged to him, and having put the inhabitants to the sword, set the place on fire. Hither it was they brought the captive king Adonibezek, where he died.

The next march of the Israelites was against the Canaanites who dwelt to the Southward on the mountains, and in the plains; where having taken Hebron, they marched to attack Debir, which was a part of Caleb's portion, but possessed by the Canaanites. This being Caleb's property, notwithstanding his great age, he resolves to storm the place; and to encourage his men the more in this brave attempt, he made proclamation in his camp, that he would give Achsah his daughter to the brave hero who should attack and take the town. The hopes of this beautiful prize, excited in all the youth a gene-

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\* *Jebus.* This city, and its territories had hitherto been possessed by the Jebusites, who sprung from Jebusi, the third son of Canaan, Gen. x. 16. It is in Judg. i. 8. called Jerusalem, which name it retained long after; for when the Israelites had sacked and burnt it, it was rebuilt again, and possessed by the Jebusites.

rous emulation, and spurred them on to the daring enterprize : but none came near the brave Othniel,\* whose conquering sword at the head of his party hewed down all before him, and led the way to victory. In short, he won the place, and with it the fair reward.

Othniel's gallantry being thus nobly rewarded by Caleb, the beauteous Achsah thinking herself not a sufficient recompence for the service of her valiant hero, puts him upon asking of her father a parcel of land which lay commodiously near their estate. Othniel thinking his service already overpaid, seems backward in the request ; therefore Achsah, addressing herself to her father Caleb, desired him in general terms to give her a blessing, but more particularly she thus applied to him ; " Thou hast  
" already given me a pleasant estate in the South part of  
" the country ; but it is hot and dry, and likely to prove  
" barren ; give me, I pray thee, this parcel of land, which  
" is well watered." Upon which the generous parent granted her request, giving her the upper and lower springs. †

The venerable Caleb, though he had passed his eighty‡ fifth year, yet retaining his youthful strength and vigour, pushes on his successes, and takes Hebron, as hath been already said, with other places, expelling the gigantic race of Anak; but the inhabitants of the valley kept their ground, being a hardy people, and well provided with warlike instruments, such as iron chariots, &c.

Those of Joseph's family, who went up against Bethel, did, by the assistance of the Lord, prevail ; for sending out spies to discover the city, they, observing a man come out of it, seized him, and promised him mercy if he would shew them the avenues to it. The man, to save his life, gave them the best information he could ; by which they so well succeeded, that having given notice to the rest of their forces to join them, they entered the

\* *Othniel*. He was somewhat of kin to Caleb, being, as Tremellius and Junius say, of the posterity of Kenaz ; from whom Caleb being descended, was therefore called the Kenezite, Numb. xxxii. 12. and Josh. xiv. v. 14.

† *Springs*. See Judges. i. 15.

‡ *Eighty*. See Josh. xiv. 11, 12.

town, and put the inhabitants to the sword, except the man who had discovered the entrance, with his family.

As for the other tribes, they also possessed themselves of the lands allotted them; but did not destroy the inhabitants, contenting themselves with making them tributary, and suffering them to dwell promiscuously amongst them. Only the children of Dan were so unsuccessful against the Amorites, that they were forced to quit the plains, and retire to the mountainous parts of the country, where they were kept pent up for a time. But the rest of the Israelites, who had been successful against the Canaanites and Amorites, fell into a great error; for either through lenity or covetousness, not making the right use of their victories, as they were expressly commanded\* by God, they not only permitted them to live, but encouraged them to trade and deal with them. This disobedience and neglect of the Divine precept, not only proved a snare to them, but likewise incensed God against them; who, to make them sensible of their folly, sent an angel† to remind them of the many favours he had bestowed upon them, in delivering them out of Egypt, and bringing them into that good land, and of his faithfulness in keeping his covenant with them, which they had so unfaithfully violated, by which ingratitude they had provoked God to withdraw his help and protection from them.

This reproof, for the present, brought the people to themselves, and made them so sensible of their sin, that they fell into a general weeping, deplored the wretchedness of their condition, and offered sacrifice to the Lord to appease his wrath, calling the name of the place where they received this reproof *Bochim*, which signifies weep-

\* *Commanded.* See Exod. xxiii. v. 32, 33. Deut. vii. 2, &c.

† *Angel.* That is, a Messenger, for so the word implies. The Rabbins will have this messenger to be Phinehas the priest. But by the words of the text, Judg. i. 1. it must be an angel or divine messenger, by whose mouth God declared, "I brought you out of Egypt;" which could not be applied to Phinehas.

ers. But\* scarcely were their tears wiped off at Bochim, when, forsaking the Lord God of their fathers, they fell into open idolatry, worshipping Baal and Ashtaroth,† the idols of the heathens; which so provoked the Lord, that he often‡ suffered them to be taken and enslaved by their enemies. But that which brought these calamities upon them was their favour to those enemies with whom God had forbidden them all manner of correspondence. For, besides that it was expressly forbidden in the law, Joshua, but just before his death, had particularly warned them of the danger they would fall into, if they should entertain any familiarity with those nations that God had doomed to destruction: and above all things, he laid a

\* Mention was made in Josh. xxiv. 31. (and the same is repeated here Judg. ii. v. 7.) that “the people of Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the Elders that outlived Joshua,” who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he wrought for Israel. But when that generation was dead, and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel, v. 10, the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, v. 11. that is, the less or tutelary gods, so called by the nations about them.

† *Baal and Ashtaroth.* That is, idols or god's of the heathen: for by Baal, or Baalim, were signified all the male gods, as the females were by Ashtaroth, which was the idol of the Zidonians, represented in the form of a sheep. The first idol, or Baal, was that of Nimrod, which the Assyrians worshipped: for Nimrod was Baal or Belus, the father of Ninus, husband to Semiramis. And Baal, Bal, Beel, Bel, Belus, &c. are the same. From the Assyrians the Bablonians took the idol and worship of Belus; as it is plain in the history of Bel and the Dragon; (which, according to the Latins, is the fourteenth chapter of Daniel.) And from the Babylonians, the Zidonians and Phoenicians took them. Hence all the idols or gods of the heathen, by an extensive name, were called Baal, Bel, Baalim. And from the variety of gods, or their places and events, they were named; as Beelphegor, that is, Priapus, the lustful god; Beelzebub, the god of flies; Beelzephon, the god of eagles, or Mercury; Baalgad, the god of Fortune. And from the word Baal are compounded several African names, (which language, as well as country, bordered on the Hebrews,) as Hannibal, that is, lord of Camps; Hasdrubal, lord of Villages, &c.

‡ *Osten.* See Judges ii. from the fourteenth verse to the end of the chapter.



most strict charge on them to take care that they did not intermarry with them, which he knew would naturally lead them to idolatry. Yet, notwithstanding they knew all this, they so far indulged themselves in a loose conversation with the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites, that, forgetting the obligation they lay under, they made intermarriages with them; the immediate consequence of which was, that they served their idols.\*

By these provocations God was so incensed against Israel, that he left them to themselves; who without his care and protection made but a poor defence against their enemies: for Cushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, invading them, made an easy conquest of them, and enslaved them for eight years. During which time of servitude, the Israelites coming to a sense and acknowledgment of their transgressions, and crying to the Lord for help, he raised up a deliverer for them. This was the brave Othniel, who in recompence of his valour had married Caleb's daughter. This hero, being divinely inspired,† undertook the deliverance of the Israelites, defeated Cushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, and by this victory over the Syrians procured to the Israelites a peace of forty‡ years; during which time Othniel governed Israel, and was the first of those we call Judges.

The Israelites, having under Othniel's peaceful administration, enjoyed uninterrupted rest and tranquility, grew wanton; and ungratefully forgetting the former benefits which God had bestowed upon them, relapsed

\* *Idols.* See Judges iii. 6.

† *Inspired.* All excellent qualities, whether natural or supernatural, are in the holy Scripture ascribed to the "Spirit of the Lord." Thus Bezaleel, Exod. xxxi. 3. is said to be "filled with the Spirit of God," when he was appointed to build the Tabernacle. The same is said of Gideon, Samson, Saul, and others.

‡ *Forty years.* That is, from the death of Joshua, as some compute it; but it must be in all probability from the time of their deliverance by the conduct of Othniel, who Du Pin says, (and with great reason,) governed Israel in peace for the space of forty years.

into their former sins of apostacy and corruption in religion. Of which the two following events\* are notorious instances.

There was about this time a devout woman of the tribe of Dan, who, through a mistaken zeal, had dedicated a sum of money to the Lord, and laid it by, intending her son should make with it an idol, or Teraphim. Her son, whose name was Micah, finding the money, but not knowing to what use his mother had devoted it, took it for himself. She, missing the money, and not suspecting her son, did in his presence curse the sacrilegious thief; which so affrighted the son, that he confessed the fact, and restored it to her, being in all eleven hundred shekels† of silver. The mother, having received her money again, took two hundred shekels of it, and gave them to a founder to make an idol; which being done, she placed it in the house of her son's gods: for he had made a Teraphim‡

\* *Events.* These two events are mentioned in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth chapters of Judges; and being inserted toward the end of the book, seem as if they referred to later times; but in the judgment of most learned men, they were transacted about this time. Their reasons are too many to recount; we therefore insert them here, as the most likely times for such evils to have been committed in. For it is plain from the text that, these things happened "when there was no king (that is, *ruler*; for, properly speaking, there had been hitherto no king) in Israel; but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." *cb.* xvii. 6. xviii. 1. xix. 1.

† *Shekels.* Which, if common shekels, at one shilling and three pence each, would amount to sixty-eight pounds fifteen shillings of English money; but if shekels of the sanctuary, double that sum.

‡ *Teraphim.* We have already spoken something of Teraphim in the story of Jacob's flight from Laban, when Rachel took away with her her father's Teraphim, to which we refer. Though the times in which this happened were evil for want of due government, and intermingling with their heathen neighbours, yet we can hardly conceive they were already so degenerate, as to set up oracular images whereby to ask counsel of the devil. It is more probable that they conceived they might lawfully worship God by or through images (as too many called Christians falsely suppose they may;) and it is evident from the text, Judges xvii. 3. that Micah's mother dedicated that

and an ephod, and consecrated\* one of his sons to be his priest for a while, till he could procure a Levite, which he shortly did; for soon after, a certain young man, who was a Levite, and had dwelt some time at Bethlehem-Judah, travelling from thence to seek a better settlement, came in his way to Micah's house in Mount Ephraim. Micah, glad of this opportunity, invited the young Levite to dwell with him, and to be to him a father† and a priest, offering him for his wages ten shekels of silver by the year, his diet, and two suits of apparel, one for common use, and the other to officiate in. The Levite, liking the terms, closes with Micah, and became one of his family. On the other hand, Micah was as much pleased in the hopes and confidence that the Lord would prosper him, because he had procured a Levite‡ to be his priest.

money to Jehovah, with which the Teraphim, &c. were to be made: and Micah, when he formed the Teraphim, made also an Ephod, *ver.* 5. which was a kind of sacred garment appointed of God himself, for the use of the priest, *Exod.* xxviii. 4. and by which they were used to ask counsel of God, as in the case of David. *1 Sam.* xxx. 7, 8.

\* *Consecrated.* This was a great abuse, and imputable to the licentiousness of those times, when "every one did what seemed right in his own eyes." What is here, *Judg.* xvii. 5. rendered *consecration* is originally *filling the hand*, and is a Hebrew phrase; consecrating being performed as well by filling the hand with gifts and victims, as by the anointing oil.

† *Father.* The priest was called a father for reverence' sake, being indeed a spiritual father to the laity, as having the care of their souls, and the charge of the the holy things. Thus are preceptors called fathers to their pupils, senators fathers to the citizens, princes fathers of their countries, &c.

‡ *Levite.* Who this young Levite was, is difficult to say. He is called Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, *cb.* xviii. 30. But who this Manasseh was is uncertain. Tremellius and Junius call Jonathan *Pronepos Moschis, ex Manasseb.* *Annot.* on *Judg.* xvii. 1. As if Manasseh had been Moses' son, Gershom Moses' grandson, and this Jonathan Moses' great grandson. But since we read of no more than two sons that Moses had, viz. Gershom and Eliezer, *Exod.* xviii. 4. this must be considered some other way. The old Latin translation, which is called St. Jerome's, reads it Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses. And another says, the Hebrews read Moses for Manasseh; which seems most likely, if any such Jonathan the son of Gershom can be found, and whose age may suit the time of this story.

About the same time, some of the tribe of Dan, finding the lot which fell to them, upon the division of the land in Joshua's\* time, too little for them, and not even enjoying all that, (for the Amorites, as hath been already said, would not suffer them to possess the valley, which was the best and richest part, but forced them up into the mountains) they were obliged to seek out more room to enlarge their quarters. Whereupon, chusing five men of courage, they sent them to take a view of the country. These spies, in their travels, came to Micah's house, where they were entertained; and knowing the young Levite by his voice, they asked him how he came thither, and what business he had there. He told them what agreement Micah had made with him, and that he was Micah's priest. When they heard this, they desired him to ask counsel of God, that they might know whether their journey would be prosperous or not. And the priest said unto them, Go in peace. With this encouragement they went on till they came to Laish; where observing the people lived very secure and careless, without any sort of discipline or government, they concluded it would be no difficult matter to conquer them, and take possession of the place. With this report they returned to their friends, giving them an account that the land abounded with all the necessaries of life.

The Danites embrace the opportunity, and arming a party of six hundred men, they sent them to take possession of the city of Laish. These marching through Mount Ephraim came in their way by Micah's house, where making a halt, the five spies, who were guides to this party, and had been there before, acquainted the rest that there were in that house an Ephod and Teraphim; and a graven and a molten image, desiring them to consider whether they had best tarry there to ask counsel of the Lord concerning the success of their enterprize, or to take the ephod and images with them, to consult upon all oc-

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\* *Josua's.* See Josh. xix. 47.



casions. The last seemed most expedient; for the five spies that were the guides, leaving the party at the gate, went into the house: Micah being from home, they saluted the Levite, whom they sent to the gate to talk with the Danites; and whilst they entertained him without, the guides, having been there before, and knowing the rooms of the house, plundered it of the Ephod, the Teraphim, and other images, and brought them out to their brethren at the gate. The priest seeing this, was amazed at the boldness of the attempt, and asked them what they meant by it. They bade him be silent, and consider whether it were better for him to be a priest to a single family, or a whole tribe in Israel. This advantageous offer soon gained the young priest to their side, who joined with them, and went off with the plunder.

Micah returning, and understanding that his priest and Teraphim were gone, gathers as many friends as he could, and pursues the Danites. But they were a long way from his house before he could overtake them: at length coming within view of them, some of the Danite soldiers in the rear heard them make an outcry; and facing about, asked Micah, "what ailed him?" He told them they had robbed him. Upon which the Danites advised him to be silent; for if they provoked the rest of the party, it would cost them their lives. Micah finding himself overmatched, was obliged to put up with the wrong, and return home without either his gods or his priest.

The Danites, having thus got rid of Micah and his friends, continuing their march, came in a short time to Laish; and finding the people quiet and secure, they set the city on fire, and surprising the inhabitants, who were busy in extinguishing the fire, they put them all to the sword. Afterwards rebuilding the city, they called it Dan, after the name of their father; and settling there, they set up Micah's graven image, which they had stolen from him; and making the young Levite Jonathan their priest, he and his sons continued to officiate as priests to the tribe of Dan all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh, until the captivity of the land, which is supposed

to be till the ark in Eli's time was taken by the Philistines,\* about three hundred years after this.

This story is an instance of the great apostacy, and corruption of religion among the Israelites: that which follows, is as pregnant a proof of immorality and depravation of manners amongst them; which was thus:

A Levite who dwelt on the side of Mount Ephraim having taken a wife out of Bethlehem-Judah, she proved a lewd woman, and either through fear or shame left her husband, and ran home to her father at Bethlehem-Judah, where she tarried four months. In which time her husband, having somewhat digested the injury, went at the four months' end to her father's, with an intent to be reconciled to her, and bring her home with him; in order to which he took a servant and a couple of asses. Being arrived at her father's house, he was received with great joy, and entertained for three days. At the importunity of the father he stays the fourth day, and was kept till the afternoon the next day; but the Levite resolving to be gone, took his leave, and with his wife and servant set out. By the time they were got as far as Jebus,† the day was far spent, and the servant, fearing to be benighted, desired his master to put in there. But the place not being fully possessed and inhabited by Israelites, he endeavoured to reach Gibeah,‡ whither they arrived just at sun set; and sitting down in the street, as the custom of travellers then was, they waited to see who would invite them to a lodging. After waiting long, an old man came from his work out of the field, and seeing strangers sitting in the street, went up to them, and saluting them, asked whence they came, and whither they were travelling. The Levite told him; and complained of the incivility of the people, none having invited him to a lodging, though he had his own

\* *Philistines.* See 1 Sam. iv.

† *Jebus.* This was that part of Jerusalem, which belonged to Benjamin, but was possessed chiefly by the Jebusites.

‡ *Gibeah.* This city belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, and is also called Ramah.

provisions with him. The hospitable old man, who was of Mount Ephraim, though he dwelt at Gibeah, courteously invited them to lodge at his house, where he entertained them very hospitably. While they were at supper, the men of the city having observed where they put in, came to the house, and knocking with great violence at the door, demanded of the master of the house to deliver the man that came in there, that they might know him.\* The good old man, to prevent danger to his guests, ventured among this tumultuous rabble to appease them, offering them his only daughter, who was a virgin, and the Levite's concubine, to use at their pleasure, provided they would not offer any violence to his guest. This would not do; whereupon the Levite, seeing them so outrageous, to save himself, turned his concubine† out among them, who abused her all night, not letting her go till break of day; and then she, returning to the house where her husband lay, fell down dead at the door, her hands lying upon the threshold. The Levite opening the door, and seeing her lie there, concluded she was asleep, and therefore bid her get up, that they might be going; but when he perceived she was dead, he took her up, and, making no complaint there, laid her upon one of the asses, and hastened home as fast as he could. And now he had time to meditate a revenge suitable to the affront, which he in this horrid manner expressed: he divided his dead concubine into twelve pieces, and sent to every tribe a piece, through the whole coasts of Israel, with an account of the barbarous and inhospitable treatment he had met with at Gibeah, that so the whole family of Israel in general, being made sensible of the wrong done to him and his concubine, might join in revenging it.

The fact indeed was in itself most barbarous; but the revengeful Levite's expressing his resentment in a man-

\* *Know him.* Just as the Sodomites offered to Lot, demanding to have the Levite delivered to them, that they might abuse him in an unnatural way.

† *Concubine.* She is sometimes called wife, as in *cb.* xix. 1. but oftener Concubine.

ner so horrid, enhanced the heinousness of the crime, and made a deeper impression on the minds of the Israelites, who, upon sight of each piece of the divided concubine, unanimously declared, That there never was such a deed done or seen since the day that the children of Israel came up out of Egypt. And to acquit themselves of the guilt of so wicked a transaction, the whole congregation of Israel met at Mizpeh, that they might there examine the business before the Lord; where demanding of the Levite an account of the whole matter, he thus in short, sums it up to them: "I came with my concubine to Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin, to lodge: but the men of Gibeah beset the house where I was with a design to murder me; and my concubine have they forced, that she is dead; by which they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel. Whereupon I took my concubine home, and having cut her into pieces, I sent her throughout all the inheritance of Israel. Now ye being sons of Israel, are concerned in this abuse as well as I: therefore consider and advise what is to be done." When the people had received this account of the matter, they were highly incensed against the men of Gibeah, and resolved not to return to their houses till they had brought the offenders to condign punishment. And that they might lose no time, they agreed to draw ten men out of every hundred, an hundred out of every thousand, and a thousand out of every ten thousand, who should be employed to furnish the army with provisions and other necessaries.

But before they proceeded to extremities, they resolved to send messengers through all the tribe of Benjamin, to lay the matter before them, and to demand those men who had committed this outrage to be delivered to them, that they might do justice on them. But the people of Benjamin, in contempt of their brethren the Israelites, resolve to stand by the offenders, and muster up all their force to defend them. The Israelitish army consisted of four hundred thousand able men; that of Benjamin but of twenty-six thousand: a great disparity, and which shewed the latter desperate. The Israelites, over-confi-



dent of their strength, and despising the Benjamites, who were so few, depending on the justice of their cause, never went to ask counsel of God, (as in such emergencies they usually did,) whether they should go to war with their brethren or not; but taking that for granted, to prevent any difference that might arise among the tribes about precedence in this expedition, they went up to the house of God only to know which tribe should lead the van, and the lot fell to Judah. Upon this, the Israelitish army advanced, and sat down before Gibeah; from whence the Benjamites made a brisk sally upon them, cut off two and twenty thousand of them, and retreated to the town with very little loss. This unexpected disaster made the Israelites sensible of their neglect, in not enquiring of the Lord whether they ought to have undertaken this war or not. Wherefore, bewailing their misfortune in the last action, they ask counsel of the Lord, (but in an irregular manner,) who, to punish them for their presumption, bade them go, but promised them no success. The heedless Israelites taking this for an assurance of victory, drew up their army again before Gibeah, offering the Benjamites battle; who being flushed with their former success made another bold sally, and cut off eighteen thousand more of the Israelites. The second defeat brought the Israelites to a sense of their former presumption and neglect: wherefore, going up to the house of the Lord, they humbled themselves with weeping and fasting that day, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord. And having thus regularly proceeded in their humiliation, they again enquired of the Lord whether they should attack the Benjamites, or forbear: for at this time the ark of the covenant of God was in Shiloh, and Phinehas\* was priest. And now the Lord having sufficiently corrected the confidence of the Israelites, not only gives them commission to go against the Benjamites, but assures them of victory.

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\* *Phinebas*. This passage in Judg. xx. 28. (rejecting the Rabbinical dream, that Phinehas lived three hundred years) shews plainly, that this happened in the times of the Judges.

With this encouragement the Israelites prepare a third time to attack the Benjamites ; and to make their victory the more secure, they lay an ambuscade in the meadows behind Gibeah, that when the fight was begun, the Israelites, by a feigned flight drawing the Benjamites from the city, those that lay in ambush should seize the city and set it on fire as a signal to the main body of the Israelitish army to rally, and renew the fight.

Matters being thus disposed, ten thousand choice troops of the Israelites appear before Gibeah ; which the Benjamites seeing, sallied out of the town, and fell briskly upon them, killing about thirty of them. The Israelites then retiring, as if they were afraid, pretended to fly ; and the Benjamites, supposing the day was their own, eagerly pursued them so far, that they were at a distance from the town sufficient to give the ambuscade an opportunity to seize the place, and set it on fire. The main body of the Israelitish army seeing this, faced about, and charged furiously upon the Benjamites, who now began to think of retreating to their city ; but when by the smoke and flame they saw themselves circumvented, they fled toward the wilderness, hoping to secure themselves there : but in vain ; for being enclosed by the main army and the ambuscade, they were easily trodden down. In this action and the pursuit, twenty-five thousand one hundred of the Benjamites were slain ; and a thousand more having been destroyed in other actions, there remained but six hundred men of the Benjamites, who fled to the rock Rimmon, and hid themselves there ; all the rest of that tribe, together with their towns and cattle, suffered military execution.

The heat of this action being over, the Israelites began to reflect on the low condition to which the tribe of Benjamin was reduced by this general slaughter, and which affected them in a very sensible manner ; and the rather, because upon their first engaging in the quarrel, they had rashly sworn that no Israelite should give his daughter in marriage to a Benjamite. Upon this they repair to the Tabernacle where the Ark was, and mourned all day, saying, " O Lord, why is this come to pass, that there should this

“day be one tribe wanting in Israel?” Then rising early the next morning, they built an altar there, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings to the Lord. After which applying themselves to find out some expedient to elude their rash oath, and save the sinking tribe, they recollected that they had at first bound themselves by oath to put to death all those who should not appear with them at Mizpeh, and join in the common cause against the Benjamites. Upon enquiry, they found that none came from Jabesh-Gilead to the assembly at the camp: therefore sending twelve thousand of their best men to Jabesh-Gilead, they commanded them to put man, woman and child to the sword, except such young women as were virgins, whom they were to bring with them to the camp. These troops having done execution on Jabesh-Gilead, as they were commanded, brought away with them four hundred virgins to the Israelites; who immediately sent heralds to the rock Rimmon, to treat with the few remaining Benjamites, offering them peace, and inviting them to return. The poor Benjamites gladly embrace the offer; and coming to the camp, the Israelites bestowed on them the Gileadite virgins for wives. But the Benjamites being six hundred in number, there was not one for every man. Upon which, they invented another expedient to supply this deficiency: once a year there was a solemn feast held at Shiloh, which the young maidens of Shiloh used to attend and to dance: the Israelites therefore directed the Benjamites who wanted wives to lie in wait in the vineyards at the time of the feast, and when they should see the Shiloh damsels come to dance, they should seize every man one for his wife, and carry them away into their own country, promising them that if any of the relations of the damsels should complain, they would screen them from danger. The Benjamites pursue these instructions; and watching their opportunity, took every one his damsel, and carried them off to their own inheritance: where, repairing their cities, they settled again, and in time recruited their tribe.

These civil and intestine quarrels among the tribes being thus reconciled, the Israelites did not long enjoy



peace; for continuing to provoke God by their profaneness and irregularities, he again chastises them by their enemies: the most powerful of whom was Eglon, king of Moab. Him God raised up to be a scourge, who otherwise had neither strength nor courage to attack Israel. But being designed by the Almighty to be the instrument of his vengeance, Eglon armed the Ammonites and Amalekites, and fell upon the Israelites, whom he defeated, and possessed himself of the city of Palm-trees. And as an aggravation of their offence in so suddenly transgressing after their late deliverance from bondage; God enlarged their punishment, for their servitude was now advanced from eight years to eighteen, which was the space of time they served Moab.

But when the Israelites, under a sense of their misery, addressed themselves to their God, he raised them another deliverer in the person of Ehud, the son of Gera, a man who was left-handed in consequence of lameness in his right-hand. Ehud was a wise and politic man, and having observed the weakness of the Israelites by their eighteen years' slavery; and the low condition of the Benjamites, that they were not able by open war to attempt any thing against their oppressors, he contrives first to take off Eglon privately; knowing it would be much easier to deal with the Moabites when they should be in confusion for want of a leader, than while they had their king at their head. To effect this the more plausibly, he repairs to the Moabitish court, where under pretence of delivering a present to the king from his servants, the children of Israel, he is admitted into the king's presence. When he had delivered the present, and dismissed his servants that brought it, he, returning to the king, told him he had a private message to him. The king then ordered him to be silent till the company were withdrawn: after which, Ehud approaches, and informs his Majesty that he was charged with a message from God\* to him. Hearing

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\* *God.* This was Ehud's commission from God to dispatch Eglon, and therefore is not to be drawn into an example by others; for in *Judg. iii. 15*, Ehud



this, Eglon, in reverence to the name of God, arose from his seat, when Ehud seizing the favourable moment, stabbed him in his belly, with a dagger which he had concealed under his clothes, so forcibly, that he thrust the dagger, hilt and all, into his belly; and the king being a very fat man, the fat of his belly closed over the dagger, so that he could not draw it out. Ehud seeing him dead, left him wallowing in his blood, and shutting the door after him, which he also locked, he made the best of his way home.

The servants of the king, observing Ehud retire, return to pay their usual attendance on their master; but finding the door locked, they concluded he chose to be alone, and therefore withdrew; but after long waiting, and finding the door still shut, they took a key and opened it, and to their great surprise found their king a breathless corpse on the ground. This long delay gave Ehud a fair opportunity to escape; which he improved by his utmost speed, and coming to Mount Ephraim, he blew a trumpet, at which signal the Israelites flocked to him, to whom he related what he had done, and bid them follow him; for God, said he, hath delivered your enemies, the Moabites, into your hands. They readily obey him, as their leader, and securing the fords of Moab towards Jordan, suffered not a man to pass over; but falling courageously upon the Moabites, while they were in that consternation for the death of their king, and want of a leader, they slew about ten thousand of the chief of them; at the same time delivering Israel, and subduing Moab.

After the death of Ehud, God raised up for Israel another deliverer in the person of Shamgar, the son of Anath, a strong and valiant man; who, when the Philistines in another quarter invaded Israel, with no better weapon than an ox-goad, slew six hundred of the Philistines, and

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must be supposed to have done this by the inspiration of God; for he is in the text called a Saviour of the children of Israel, raised up by God himself. Therefore this paraphrase may be allowed on these words, "I have a message to thee from God," that is, "God commands me to slay thee, the oppressor of Israel."

delivered them from all the dangerous neighbours, who were borderers on that side. After which Israel enjoyed a peace of eight years. In which time of liberty and ease, they grew wanton and forgetful of their former servitude; which neglect and ingratitude provoked God to raise up other instruments for their correction; the chief of whom was Jabin, who, assuming to himself the title of The king of Canaan, reigned in Hazor. He was a powerful prince, well supplied with warlike munition, having nine hundred chariots\* armed with iron, and his subjects a military people. This king lorded it over the oppressed Israelites, with great severity, for twenty years; God upon the repetition and aggravation of their transgressions, justly increasing their punishment. And so cruel were the people to them, that they durst not travel the common roads upon their ordinary occasions; but were forced to seek by-ways† to avoid their enemies, so that their highways were disused: neither could they in safety dwell in their villages, being attacked by their archers,‡ if they went but out to draw water; nay, so servile was their condition, that they were not suffered to keep any arms.§

The wretched Israelites, languishing thus under the tyranny of their enemies, God was pleased at last to remember them in mercy; and seeing their sufferings had brought them to a sense of their sins, he found out a way to deliver them, beyond what they could imagine or expect. For it is very much to be suspected, that at this time the Israelites, by the severity of their servitude, were so degenerated and dispirited, that scarcely a man could be found, qualified in their present exigencies, to assume

\* *Chariots.* These chariots were armed with scythes and swords, which being driven among the enemy cut down all before them. Xenophon, in his Cyropoedia, will have Cyrus to be the author of these chariots; but it is plain from hence, and from Josh. xvii. 16. that they were used nine hundred years before the days of Cyrus.

† *By-ways.* See Judg. v. 6.

‡ *Archers.* Ibid. v. 11.

§ *Arms.* Ibid. v. 8.

the reins of government. Hence it is recorded, that Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth, judged Israel at that time. She was a prophetess, and the Israelites used to come to her for judgment. To this extraordinary woman the Lord communicated his intention of delivering his people, and by his Spirit directed her to send for Barak, the son of Abinoam, a brave young prince of the tribe of Naphtali. He came, and she informed him, that it was the pleasure of the Lord, that he should collect together ten thousand men of the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, and lead them towards Mount Tabor; and to encourage him, she told him in the name of the Lord, that Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, with his army and chariots, should fall into his hands. Barak, considering the inequality of their forces, and the greatness of the enterprise, and thinking it necessary to have the prophetess with him, to consult upon all occasions, as well as to encourage his men, told her, If she would go with him, he would go; but not else. The undaunted prophetess consented to accompany him; but pleasantly told him, for his diffidence, that this expedition should not be for his honour; for Sisera, the general, should fall into the hands of a woman.

Departing together for Kadesh, which was Barak's residence, he soon enlisted ten thousand volunteers in Zebulun and Naphtali, and led them to Mount Tabor, the prophetess still accompanying him. Such a number of distressed people being assembled together, it soon began to be rumoured about the country; and notice being given to Sisera of this insurrection, he mustered all his force to suppress it, taking with him his nine hundred chariots of iron, and down he marches to the river Kishon. Which the courageous Deborah seeing, being divinely inspired, gave the signal for battle; saying to Barak, "Up! for this is the day, in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand." Barak upon this, marched down the mountain Tabor, and falls upon Sisera in the valley by the river: whose army God struck with such terror, by driving storms of rain and hail in their faces, that they could not stand before the Israelites; who pursuing them, put them all to the sword, except the ge-

neral Sisera; who, not daring to trust to his chariot, fled from the field of battle on foot, till he came to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber\* the Kenite, who dwelt in that country, which was at peace with king Jabin. Jael, seeing Sisera approaching, went out to meet him, and invited him to enter her tent. Rejoicing in having found such a retreat, he went in confidently, not suspecting any danger from her, whose husband was his master's ally.

Being extremely thirsty through the heat and fatigue of the day, he intreated Jael to give him a little water to drink; instead of which she gave him as much milk as he desired; when, having allayed his thirst, he directed her, that if any person should come to enquire after him, she should not acknowledge he was there. And now thinking himself safe, he laid down upon the floor to sleep, Jael very officiously covering him with a carpet; where he had not long reposed before he fell asleep; which, when Jael perceived, she took a hammer and a long nail, or tent-pin, and applying it to his temples, she struck it with such force, that it pierced through his head, and pinned him to the ground; after which she cut† off his head, and so left him. Then going to the door of the tent, she soon perceived Barak coming in pursuit of Sisera; whom she went forth to meet, and inviting him in, told him, that she could shew him the man whom he

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\* *Heber.* He was of the posterity of Hobab, otherwise called Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, and whose people went up with the children of Israel, to dwell amongst them, *Judg. i. 16.* This Heber, though a Kenite, had removed his family from the rest of the Kenites, and pitched his tent in the plain of Zanaïm, not far from Kadesh, where Barak lived. These Kenites, though they were proselytes, and worshipped the true God, according to the Mosaic Law, yet being strangers by birth, and not of the promised seed, and so not pretending a right or title to the land of Canaan, they held it the best policy, in those troublesome times, to observe a neutrality, and maintain peace as well as they could, both with the Israelites and Canaanites. Upon this ground it was that there was a peace between king Jabin and the house of Heber the Kenite; and that gave confidence to Sisera in his distress to fly to Heber's tent for protection.

† *Cat.* See *Judg. v. 26.*



sought ; which she accordingly did. By these means did God assist the Israelites in subduing Jabin king of Canaan ; continuing the war, till they had utterly destroyed him. Upon this victory, the heroine Deborah, and her valiant general Barak, sang this Triumphant Song.

Let Israel their Avenger's glory raise  
 In lofty notes of everlasting praise !  
 Hear, O ye kings ! Attentive princes hear  
 A wonderous song, that well deserves your ear !  
 When Israel's God from hostile Edom came,  
 With his own thunder arm'd, array'd in flame,  
 Trembled the earth, as o'er the clouds he rode,  
 The clouds dissolve in rain, and own th' incumbent God.  
 The mountains' tops at his approach retire,  
 Their molten entrails run in streams of fire.  
 O how unlike those novel gods, and vain  
 The hopes their silly votaries entertain.  
 Weak, unavailing names ! no help they yield ;  
 War ! war ! the gates resound, and war the field,  
 Th' alarm is giv'n, in vain are spear and shield.  
 By their insulting jealous lords bereft,  
 No refuge, but inglorious flight was left ;  
 When Deborah arose at Heav'n's command,  
 When I arose to save the orphan land.  
 Bless'd be their names, the generous few who join'd  
 To urge the happy change by Heav'n design'd !  
 By counsel or by action, pen or sword,  
 To save their country, and to help the Lord.  
 But curse ye Meroz ;\* an uncommon weight  
 Of vengeance seize 'em, and a Neutral's fate !  
 They would the spoil, tho' not the danger share ;  
 Now Sisera is fallen, they appear.  
 His boasts, his fruitless hopes, his fears are o'er ;  
 He bow'd, he fell, he sunk, to rise no more.

So let thy foes, O God ! to dust descend ;  
 But those that love Thee brighter stars attend !  
 The sun himself less glorious far than they ;  
 The sun, triumphant in the blaze of day.

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\* *Meroz*. What place this was is not certainly known, though very reasonably by some supposed to be Merom, the variation of one letter making but little difference, if other circumstances do but agree, which they seem

To these warlike and tumultuous transactions, a time of tranquillity and rest succeeded. During which, the Israelites again provoking God by relapsing into their former transgressions, he takes them more immediately into his own hands, and chastises their presumption and ingratitude by a severe famine; which raging furiously among the Israelites, many of them are obliged to quit their habitations, and seek for food in a foreign land. Among the rest, one Elimelech of Bethlehem-Judah, a man of condition and family, removed with his wife Naomi, and his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, to the country of Moab, where Elimelech soon quits this life. After whose death, his two sons, not strictly observing the law of God, took each of them a wife of the women of Moab, of inferior condition. The name of Chilion's wife was Orpah, and the name of Mahlon's Ruth. With these they lived about ten years, when Chilion and Mahlon both died childless. The unhappy Naomi, thus deprived of her husband and children, and left in a strange country, could not, with satisfaction, continue in a place, where she had lost all the external comforts of life; but being informed that the famine was over in Israel, she resolved to return to her own country; and accordingly set out for Judah, accompanied with her two daughters-in-law.

While they were on their journey, Naomi, considering that it was a sort of cruelty to take her daughters from their friends and relations, advised them to return; and to convince them that it was not out of any dislike to their

pretty much to do here. For about an hundred and twenty years before, we find, in Josh. xi. 1, &c. that Joshua at the waters of Merom, killed Jabin, king of Hazor, one of the predecessors of this Jabin, (King of the same Hazor,) whose general, Sisera, was slain by Jael. Besides, according to *Adrichon ex Hieron.* Merom was a lake, thirty furlongs broad and sixty long, situated between Cæsarea Philippi, and the sea of Galilee, the Jordan running through the middle of it. This lake at the time of the snow melting on the mountain Lebanon is very full of water, but at other times in a great measure dry. Those therefore that inhabited about this lake are cursed, because they did not only refuse succours to the Naphtalites, but underhand favoured Sisera.

company, but mere pity, that she was desirous to part with them, she gave them this affectionate blessing: "The Lord deal kindly with you, as you have done to me and mine; and grant that ye may marry again to your satisfaction, and enjoy a happy settlement." She then gave to each a parting kiss, but they in tears press her to accept of their company. She endeavours to dissuade them, by urging that if they stayed in their own country they might marry again; which they could not propose, if they went with her. At last her importunity prevailed with Orpah, who with tears taking her leave of her mother-in-law, returned to Moab. But no persuasion could prevail with Ruth, who in the most pressing manner urged Naomi to take her along with her; saying, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

Naomi, seeing the pious resolution of her daughter Ruth, pressed her no more to return, but they proceeded together to Bethlehem.

Naomi being arrived at Bethlehem, where she and her family had lived in a respectable manner, her return was generally taken notice of, and her old neighbours came to congratulate her upon her arrival in her own country. It was now the beginning of barley-harvest, (which usually was in the first month with them) when Naomi returned to Bethlehem: and Ruth the Moabitess, being an industrious woman, though poor, desired Naomi to give her leave to go into the field to glean some corn. The mother consented, and she happened to go into a field belonging to Boaz, a very wealthy person of the family of Elimelech, and nearly related to him; and there she gleaned after the reapers. She had not been long there, before Boaz himself came into the field to look after his workmen; and having saluted them in a very devout manner, he took notice of Ruth, and asked his steward who she was. He told him, she was the Moabitish dam-

sel that accompanied Naomi in her return home from the country of Moab, and that she had asked leave to glean after the reapers. Boaz, having before been acquainted with her dutiful and affectionate behaviour to her mother-in-law, his kinswoman, encouraged her to glean in his ground, and to keep with his servants, and fare as they did, and charged them not to molest her. Ruth, surprised at the unexpected civility of a stranger, returned her thanks in a most profound respect and acknowledgment of his courtesy. Boaz told her he had heard of her affectionate carriage to her mother-in-law, and that she was come with her into a strange country, out of a pious design, to be under the care and protection of the God of Israel; whom he solemnly prayed to recompense her good behaviour, and give her a full reward.

After this he treated her at his own board very liberally; and when his servants returned to their work in the field, he charged them to be civil to her, and to give her an opportunity of gleaning the more, by purposely dropping some of the sheaves. Thus Ruth continued gleaning among the servants of Boaz, till barley and wheat harvest were over, dwelling still with Naomi, to whom she returned every evening with what she had gleaned, and acquainting her with the great humanity of Boaz. Naomi, studious to recompense this tender affection of her daughter-in-law, projects how she might engage her kinsman Boaz to marry Ruth, whose civility she might reasonably imagine proceeded from some other motive than that of common courtesy or humanity. Therefore acquainting Ruth that Boaz was her near kinsman, and informing her what the law of Moses required in that case, she advised her to wash, and anoint, and dress herself, and go to Boaz's barn, where he was winnowing his barley; but not to let it be known she was there, till he had supped, and was gone to rest; giving her instructions how to proceed.

Ruth follows her mother's direction, and going to the barn, placed herself so commodiously, that she could perceive, unobserved, what passed. When Boaz had refreshed himself, he lay down at the end of a heap of corn; and



Ruth, waiting till he was asleep, came softly, and lifting up the clothes, laid herself down, undiscovered, at his feet. Boaz, waking about midnight, in a fright asked who she was? to which she answered, "I am Ruth, thy servant: Spread\* therefore the wing of thy garment over me, for thou art a near kinsman." Boaz, though somewhat advanced in years, was so far from rejecting her that he commended the method she had taken, and, being a virtuous man, told her she had shewn more piety to her husband, since deceased, than while he was living, by marrying his kinsman,† and that her virtue was conspicuous in not following young men, whether poor or rich. And therefore he assured her, he would not fail to attend to her intimation of his duty as her kinsman, to which he felt the stronger inducement, as she had the general reputation of a virtuous woman. But at the same time he informed her, that though he indeed was a near kinsman, yet there was another still nearer, to whom the custom of the country obliged him to give the preference, and that he would communicate the affair to him the next morning; and if that kinsman would take her to wife, he was at liberty so to do, otherwise he himself would assuredly marry her.

In the morning, very early, Ruth arose, that she might return undiscovered, and to avoid censure of their reputation and religion; but that she might not go home empty handed, Boaz gave her six measures of barley: with which Ruth returned to her mother, who received

\* *Spread.* This was as if she had said, "Take me to wife, as the Law directs:" for the phrase of "spreading the skirt or wing" over one, imports a taking such a one into protection. And because it is the part of a husband to protect and defend his wife from injuries; therefore to spread the wing over one is used for a *periphrasis* of marriage.

† *Kinsman.* Boaz considered it as a token of singular love to her former husband, as well as of devotion to the religion she was now converted to, that she should chuse to marry her husband's kinsman, to keep up her deceased husband's name and family, in observance of the law of God; though that kinsman was old, in comparison of her, who was young and beautiful, rather than please herself by marrying a younger man.

her joyfully, both for the present of Boaz, and his kind treatment of her daughter; whom she advised to take no notice to any one of what had passed, but patiently to wait the event; assuring her that Boaz was a man of honour, and would perform his promise.

Boaz, according to his promise, appeared in the morning at the gate of the city, which was in those days the usual place of judicature. There he met with the kinsman whom he had mentioned to Ruth; and summoning ten more of the chief of the city, he, in their presence, acquainted him, that Naomi, who was come back from the country of Moab, had a parcel of land to dispose of, which formerly belonged to Elimelech: of which he gave him this public notice, that he might redeem it,\* the right of redemption belonging in the first place to him; and therefore he desired to know his mind in this matter. The kinsman readily consented to redeem the land. But when Boaz informed him, that, at the same time, he must likewise take Ruth the Moabitess to wife, to raise up the name of her deceased husband upon his inheritance, he declined the business; giving this for a reason, That he could not do it on those terms, without destroying his own inheritance, and therefore he willingly resigned his right of redemption to Boaz; who without any scruple accepts it; and his kinsman, according to the custom of those times, in token of relinquishing or transferring his right, takes off his shoe† and delivers it to

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\* *Redeem.* The reason of this seems to be grounded upon the Law; Deut. xxv. 6. by which the first-born of such a marriage was to bear the name of the woman's former husband that was dead, to keep up his name in Israel; so that if that kinsman had married Ruth, and should have had but one son by her, that son being not to bear his name, but the name of her former husband, he himself would have had no son to keep up his name in Israel; and so his inheritance might have been lost from his name, by passing into another name and family; which he was not willing to hazard.

† *Shoe.* This was the manner of confirming bargains, sales, exchanges and alienations among the Israelites. There were two sorts of it: the first was penal; as when a man refused to marry his brother's wife, to raise up seed to the deceased,

Boaz. Upon which Boaz makes this declaration to the elders and all the people present : “ Ye are my witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s, and all that was his sons’, of the hand of Naomi. Ye see likewise that I have purchased Ruth, the Moabitess, to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon their inheritance, that their name may not be lost among their relations. Of this I call you to witness this day.” To all which the assembly gave their acknowledgment, adding a hearty prayer, that she might be fruitful as Rachel and Leah, who were the original mothers of the house of Israel. The fruit of this marriage was a son, whom they named Obed ; and who was the father of Jesse, and grandfather of king David, of whom, according to the flesh, came\* the Saviour of the world.

Deborah and Barak governed Israel with great care and prudence ; during whose administration the Israelites enjoyed a profound peace. But when Deborah and Barak were dead, they fell into their old apostacy, provoking God by their idolatry to deliver them into their enemy’s hands : which he soon did ; for he permitted the Midianites to over-run their country, who for seven years kept them in such subjection, that they were forced to betake themselves to dens in the mountains, and caves in the earth, and to fortified places ; from whence in spring-

who died childless ; for then the law commanded, Deut. xxv. 9. that the woman should pluck off his shoe, and spit in his face, using these words, “ Thus shall it be done to the man that refuseth to raise up issue to his brother’s family.” The second was cessionary, or in token of resignation, and did not reach to compel the kinsman in the second, third, or fourth degree to marry the widow ; but he might transfer his right to any other of the kindred ; and as a sign of his cession, or translation of his right, he took off his shoe and delivered it to his kinsman, who would marry the widow, in the presence of the Elders.

\* *Came.* Herein is described, how Jesus Christ, who (according to the flesh) ought to come of David, proceeded of Ruth, notwithstanding she was a Moabite of low condition, and a stranger from the people of God ; which is likewise a type, that the Gentiles should be sanctified by him, and joined with his people, and that there should be one sheepfold and one shepherd.



time they stole out to sow their land ; but towards harvest the Amalekites and Midianites came and encamped in their country, and tarried till they had devoured all the provision and forage they could find, and then returned, leaving the Israelites nothing to support life. The wretched Israelites, treated in this manner year after year, were extremely impoverished, which, at length reminded them of their sins, which had drawn down this punishment upon them, and that the only remedy was to have recourse to the Lord, who had permitted these evils to befall them. While they were supplicating God for help he sent a prophet\* to expostulate with them on their base ingratitude, by which he brought them to a sense of their folly, and his justice in punishing them.

The people, being, by a due humiliation, prepared for deliverance from the sad oppression under which they laboured, God immediately provided an instrument for this great work, in the person of Gideon the son of Joash. At this time Gideon was threshing wheat, that he might hide it from the Midianites : and while he was thus employed in providing sustenance for his family, the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said, " The Lord be with thee, thou mighty man of valour." Gideon was apprized, by the manner of this salutation, that it was a message extraordinary, and readily replied thus : " If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us ? And where are all his miracles, which our forefathers have related to us, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt ? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." The Angel looking on him steadfastly, said, " Be courageous, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites : Is it not I that send thee ?" But Gideon, considering his own weakness, and the low condition of his

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\* *Prophet.* Of this prophet's name we have no farther account. St. Augustine supposes him to be that Angel which soon after appeared to Gideon, but others generally suppose him to be some person endued with the Spirit of prophecy, and sent to the Israelites as other prophets were.



family, more than the presence of him that spoke to him, answered, "In what capacity am I to save Israel, since my family is but poor in the tribe of Manasseh, and myself the least among them?" The Angel to encourage him, said, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites with as much ease as if they were but one man."

Gideon, upon this, began to entertain some hopes, but desiring to know who it was that talked with him, he said; "If now I have found favour in thy sight, be pleased to shew me some token, whereby I may know that it is Thou, the Lord, that talkest with me: wherefore depart not hence, I pray thee, till I return with my offering, and set it before thee." The angel promised to tarry; and Gideon having prepared a kid, and some unleavened cakes, he came and presented them before the Angel: by whose direction, having laid them upon the rock, the Angel, with the end of his staff, touched the cakes and the flesh; upon which fire came out of the rock and consumed them; and the Angel instantly disappeared. Gideon upon this was satisfied that it was an Angel that had appeared to him, and crying out in despair, said, "Alas my Lord God! because I have seen an Angel face to face, I shall die." But the Angel, though Gideon could not now see him, to confirm and comfort him, bid him not fear, for he should not die. Gideon, in thankful remembrance of this gracious interview, and God's goodness to him, built an altar there, and called it Jehovah-Shalom, that is, the Lord of Peace.\*

The same night the Lord commanded Gideon to demolish the altar of Baal, which in those corrupt times had been erected, and to cut down the groves there, and build an altar to the Lord his God upon the top of the

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\* *Peace.* That this was not a mere created Angel is evident, from his assuming the incommunicable name Jehovah, See Judges iv. 14. 16. 23, &c. The Jews, in their Targum, stile him "The Word of the Lord." Doubtless he was the Son of God himself, appearing in a human form.

rock ; after which to sacrifice his father's second\* bullock upon it, which was seven years old, and offer it for a burnt sacrifice, with the wood of the grove which he was to cut down. Gideon readily obeys God ; but considering that it would be difficult to accomplish this in the day time, he resolves to do it by night ; and taking ten of his servants to assist him, he did as God had commanded him. The inhabitants of the place, being informed what Gideon had done, demanded him of his father, that they might put him to death : but Joash would not deliver his son, resolutely saying, " If Baal is God, let him avenge himself on him that destroyed his altar." From which occasion Joash called his son Jerub-Baal ; which signifies, Let Baal avenge. Thus this tumult ended.

It was now about the time when the Midianites and Amalekites, with other Eastern people, used to come and plunder the country, who appearing in a vast body, encamped in the valley of Jezreel. Upon which Gideon, inspired with a more than ordinary courage, by sound of trumpet summoned all those of his own family to come in quickly to him. Then sending messengers through the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, they came in such numbers, that in a short time he could muster up an army of two and thirty thousand men ; which were but few in comparison of the enemy's army, which consisted of a hundred and thirty-five thousand men. Gideon, considering the vast majority of the enemy's forces, intreated the Lord to grant a sign, or omen, to assure him and his army of success. The sign he proposed was, That he, laying a fleece of wool on the floor, the dew should be upon the fleece only, and the earth around it should be dry. Which the next morning

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\* *Second.* This bullock is thought by the Rabbins and others to be called the second, from the stall in which it stood and was fed, which was the second in order of place ; and being as many years old, as their subjection to Midian was, the destroying this bullock might in some measure prefigure the breaking off the Midianitish yoke from the neck of Israel, by Gideon ; whose name signifies a *breaker* or *destroyer*.

was done; for the ground about it was dry, but the fleece so full of dew, that he wrung a bowl full of water out of it. Then inverting\* the former manner, he desired that the fleece might be dry, and the ground dewy; which was likewise done.

Gideon, being fully convinced by this double miracle; resolves forthwith to attack the enemy. But God, knowing the folly and ingratitude of the Israelites, and rightly foreseeing, that if, with this army they should conquer the Midianites, they would vainly impute it to their own courage and numbers, and not to his assistance; ordered Gideon to make proclamation in the camp, that whosoever was afraid should have liberty to return home. Upon which, two and twenty thousand quitted this expedition, only ten thousand remaining with Gideon. This was a very inconsiderable number in comparison with the numerous host of the Midianites: But yet, few as the Israelites were, it came within the verge of possibility, that they might defeat their foes with this handful of men: and therefore God, judging them still too many, and resolving that the whole action and victory should appear to be his own doing, ordered Gideon to bring his soldiers down to the water, where he would give him a sign to direct him what men to select for this business; which was this: They, who took up water in their hand and lapped it, should go with him; but they who laid down to drink, should not go. Only three hundred of them drank out of their hands; whom God commanded him to keep with him, and dismiss the rest. But lest Gideon, upon God's reducing his army to so small a number as three hundred men, should grow diffident of the promised success, God commands him, to take his servant Phura, and late at night go to the enemy's camp and listen; where he should hear that which would encourage

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\* *Inverting.* It may reasonably be supposed, that Gideon, for his own satisfaction would not have been thus impertinent to require a repetition of the sign; but that he rather did it to encourage his men, and to take off all suspicion of art or contrivance.



him. Which he accordingly did ; and there he heard a soldier expounding a dream to another, which was so in favour of the Israelites, that he heard his own name mentioned with this advantage, that God had delivered the Midianitish army into the hand of Gideon.

Gideon, having heard this, in humble gratitude bows himself to God ; and returning undiscovered, put his men in order, dividing them into three companies, an hundred in each ; he then gave to every man a trumpet, and a pitcher with a burning lamp in it, charging them to observe his motions, and do just as they should see him do. Gideon having thus disposed this little body of men, put himself at the head of one of them, and giving the signal by breaking the pitcher, and sounding his trumpet, the rest did the same, and with a terrible shout they cried out, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon !" This alarm affected the eyes and ears of the Midianites with unusual objects, which, increased by the horror of the night, so added to their confusion, that mistaking their own party, they fell on each other's swords. God having before disposed the Midianites for destruction, Gideon and his army obtained an easy victory, having nothing to do but to pursue a flying timorous enemy. In this they were assisted by those, who upon proclamation, had deserted the common cause ; and who though afraid to fight, yet had courage enough to pursue. Gideon, to make sure work, and to prevent the Midianites for some ages to give Israel any disturbance, sends orders to the Ephraimites to possess themselves of the passes on the river Jordan, that none of them might escape : which they accordingly performed, taking Oreb and Zeeb, two Midianitish princes, whom they slew, and then followed the pursuit : which Gideon and his party continued very closely till they came to Succoth, where, being faint and weary, they halted, and Gideon requested the inhabitants to furnish them with refreshment. The princes of Succoth knowing that Gideon with his small party was in chase of Zebah and Zalmunna, two of the kings of Midian, who, with fifteen thousand men, were fled to Karcor, instead of giving Gideon and his soldiers any refreshment, ridiculed



him on the account of his little army, and in derision asked him, whether he was so secure of victory over the princes he pursued, as to demand relief of them? This unmannerly and inhospitable treatment so incensed Gideon, that he told them, If the Lord should give him success against Zeba and Zalmunna, he would make them repent their incivility. The same he threatened to the inhabitants of Penuel, for the like rudeness; and with his fatigued party continued the pursuit till he came to Karcor, where the two Midianitish princes, with their rallied forces, lay thoughtless of danger. Gideon, seizing the advantage of their security, surprised and defeated them, taking the two kings prisoners, whom he brought in triumph with him to Succoth: where, calling the chiefs of the place, seventy-seven in number, to a severe account, he chastised them with thorns and briars, as he had before threatened. Nor was he more lenient to Penuel, whose fortifications he demolished, and slew the governors.

The two captive kings, Zeba and Zalmunna, had, in their march, laid all waste before them, and put many to the sword; among whom Gideon's family shared the common fate of the distressed at Tabor; and Gideon, intending to shew mercy to the two kings, if they had shewed any to his family, demanded, what manner of men they were whom they had slain at Tabor; who answered somewhat flatteringly, that they were like himself, possessing the majestic appearance of princes. Gideon, from their answer, concluding they were his brethren whom they had slain, declared, that if they had spared them, he would have saved their lives; but since they had killed his brethren, they must expect no mercy. Then commanding his son Jether to fall upon them, he being but a youth, and somewhat timorous, Gideon dispatched them with his own hand;\* ordering them to be stripped

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\* *Hand.* It was common, in very ancient times, for great men to execute the sentence of the law upon criminals, as it is now to pronounce it. Officers,

of their royal ornaments, and their camels of their rich trappings and furniture.

The Ephraimites, who had slain Oreb and Zeeb, brought their heads to Gideon, to let him see what service they had done ; and beginning to quarrel with Gideon for not calling upon them at the first, he wisely pacified them by magnifying their service and success in the pursuit. And now the strength of Midian being thus broken, by the slaughter of their whole army, Israel enjoyed a peace of forty years.

The Israelites, enraptured with the military exploits of Gideon, and the capacity he had discovered in the whole affair, unanimously determined to reward his patriotism, by settling the government on himself and his family ; of which they made him a generous offer : but Gideon, piously sensible that the whole glory of the late victory was due to God, as generously declined the flattering offer, saying, " I will not rule over you, neither shall my son, but the Lord shall rule over you : yet to let you see I do not slight your kindness, I will request one thing of you ; and that is, that you will give me the ear-rings of your plunder." To this they all readily consented, and spreading a garment on the ground, they threw in the ear-rings, which by weight amounted to one thousand seven hundred shekels\* of gold ; beside the rich ornaments and robes of the kings, with the chains that were upon the camels' necks. Of this gold Gideon made an Ephod,† and placed it in his own city Ophrah, where

like the *Carnifices* of the Romans, or our *Executioners* were then unknown. Gideon might also wish his son to be animated in early life, against the enemies of Israel, like Hannibal, in after times, against the Romans.

\* *Shekels*. If the shekel of gold was in value fifteen shillings of English money, as Godwyn computes it ; these one thousand seven hundred shekels would amount to one thousand two hundred and seventy-five pounds.

† *Ephod*. The Ephod was the upper garment which the priest wore upon his shoulders. Gideon's design in making this Ephod, is variously questioned by commentators. Some will have it, that he made an idol, and that from Judges, viii. 27, " Israel went a whoring after it, which was the ruin of Gideon and his family." But

he dwelt, as a monument of this victory. Which in time, being perverted, contrary to the intention of Gideon, proved a snare to his family, and indeed to the whole house of Israel.\*

After this victory Gideon lived forty years, he and all Israel enjoying a profound tranquillity : but no sooner was he dead, than Israel fell into their old sins of idolatry and ingratitude, not only to God, but to the memory of Gideon their deliverer. Gideon by several wives had seventy sons ; and by a concubine he had one son, whom he named Abimelech. And though Gideon had refused the government of Israel, both for himself and his sons, yet as soon as he was dead, his son Abimelech, an aspiring youth, suggesting to his mother's family at Shechem, that his seventy brethren would usurp the govern-

this inference is unjust, for who can suppose, that a man familiar with God, and chosen by him, as Gideon was, after so signal a victory, as he by God's immediate assistance and direction had gained, should turn idolater ? Others think that Gideon made of this gold, a military garment, as a monument of this victory, which the Israelites afterwards turned into an idol. But St. Augustine, with some others, seem to take it right, and by the Ephod understand sacerdotal ornaments in general, and other necessary utensils belonging to the priestly office ; which the Israelites, after Gideon's death, perverted to idolatrous uses. For the text says, during Gideon's life, which lasted forty years after this victory, the Israelites lived peaceably, and that Gideon died in a good age ; which we cannot suppose if he had been an idolater ; nor can it be inferred from hence, that his house was ruined in his time, for he left seventy sons behind him ; so that this ruin befel his family in the general ruin of Israel, when they fell into intestine feuds and idolatry. We may therefore justly conclude that Gideon made this Ephod with no other intention, but that it might be a lasting monument of the victory obtained by Israel over Midian.

\* *Israel.* Gideon probably intended, chiefly, a memorial of the great deliverance, in his own city, but in process of time, it was the occasion of superstition and idolatry. Gideon himself, in his old age, abated in his zeal for the true God and his worship, and it proved ultimately the ruin of his family. It often happens that a multitude of persons are led into false ways, by one false step, of a good and great man : the utmost care, therefore, ought to be taken, not to make innovations in the worship of God as prescribed in his own word.

ment over them, advised them to consider, whether it would not be better for them to be governed by one, than by seventy persons; at the same time reminding them that he was of their own family and kindred. His relations, upon this suggestion, proposed advancement to themselves, which they insinuated to the Shechemites; who closing with the project, contrived how to advance Abimelech to the government; and that money might not be wanting to forward their design, they took some out of the treasury of their god Baal-berith, and gave it to Abimelech, who with it hired a company of dissolute fellows to attend him. With these ruffians he repaired to the house of his deceased father, at Ophrah, where he seized sixty-nine of his brethren, and slew them upon one stone;\* the youngest, named Jotham, having timely notice, escaping. Soon after this bloody and unnatural execution, the Shechemites having nothing to fear from Gideon's house, assembled together at Millo, and chose Abimelech king.†

When young Jotham heard this, he went to the top of Mount Gerizim, where, in a parabolical‡ oration he represented to the Shechemites, how his father, Jerub-Baal, (Gideon) having refused to have the government of Israel settled upon him and his family; and that they had now disposed of it to one, as much inferior in virtue and honour to Gideon and his lawful sons, as the bramble is to

\* *Stone.* Some will have this stone to be an altar, dedicated by Abimelech to the idol Baal, and erected in the same place, where his father, Gideon, had before destroyed the altar of Baal, to recompense the disgrace done by him to the idol.

† *King.* In this choice there were neither the call of God, nor the consent of the people; (who seldom, except in a tumultuous manner, had any thing to do with things of this nature) for Abimelech was not appointed king by the body of the Israelites, but by a few disorderly seditious Shechemites, without the knowledge of Judah or the other tribes; and reigned only in Shechem.

‡ *Parabolical.* See Judges ix. 8.



the olive, fig-tree, or vine;\* he expostulated on the injury done to his family, and reproached them with their ingratitude: "If you have done truly and sincerely in making Abimelech king; and if you have dealt well with Jerub-Baal and his house, who merited so well of you: (for my father fought for you, and delivered you from the oppression of Midian, and yet you have risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, and made Abimelech, the son of his concubine, king, because he is your brother:) If you have done well in this, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him rejoice in you. But if not, let fire† come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech."

Jotham having thus delivered himself to the Shechemites, made his escape to Beer, where he lived secure from Abimelech's rage. And within three years afterwards, his curse was verified both upon Abimelech and the Shechemites; for they conspired against Abimelech, attempting to seize or kill him.‡ But being disappointed of their purpose, they joined another profligate wretch, and his company, one that lived by the spoil of others, as the Shechemites did. His name was Gaal, the son of Ebed, an impudent boaster, but a very coward.

Gaal being set at the head of this dissolute gang, ravaged the country without controul for some time, spoil-

\* *Vine.* This fable, the first we meet with in ancient history, was composed long before the time of Æsop, or any other writer of fables with whom we are acquainted. Truth, in this disguise, made a deeper impression, and gave less offence, than when conveyed in direct terms. As this is one of the first, so it is one of the most beautiful compositions of the kind.

† *Fire.* That is, let Abimelech be a scourge to the Shechemites, and they to him, in expiation of their injustice and ingratitude to the house of Gideon.

‡ *Him.* "The triumphing of the wicked is short." Jotham had said—"Let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem, and let fire come out from the men of Shechem and devour Abimelech;" and in the course of three years it begins to be accomplished, by the spirit of discord, let loose among them, Judges ix. 23.

ing the vineyards of the Shechemites who made Abimelech king; and in their mirth and jollity they despised Abimelech; but none spoke with more contempt of him than Gaal. The wild carriage of this foolish fellow soon reached the ear of Zebul, who was Abimelech's Viceroy in Shechem; but he not being strong enough to chastise him for his insolence, sends privately to Abimelech, to acquaint him that Gaal and his mad crew were come to Shechem, and had fortified the city against him, advising him to come by night, and lie in ambush till the next morning, that so he might surprise them. Abimelech approves of the stratagem, and forthwith put it in execution; which succeeded so well, that Gaal, and those that followed him were defeated and slain; and the next day he stormed the place and took it; and to express his resentment more furiously, after he had demolished the city, he sowed it with salt.\* But during these transactions, some that escaped the fury of the conqueror's sword, and had fled to the tower, seeing the houses of the city destroyed, not supposing themselves safe in the tower, took sanctuary in a fort belonging to the temple of their god Berith: † which Abimelech hearing, he takes an axe in his hand,

\* *Salt.* This was an old custom of punishing cities for treachery. Not that the strewing of salt signified drying up, or rendering of the soil barren; (for there was no occasion for that in an inhabited town) but to shew the detestation of their rebellion, and that hereafter none should rebuild or repeople it. In this action, part of Jotham's curse was accomplished; for Abimelech, though not a lawful king, yet treated the Shechemites justly, who after they had made him their king, revolted from him.

† *Berith.* *Baal-Berith*, or *Eaal the Purifier*, was an idol worshipped by these people. This name denoted not only the purifying nature of fire (that *συναγωγὴ ἀμειψῆς* *unsullied element*) but expressed their expectation of the great *ברית* *Purifier from sin*. To this Baal, probably, as well as to others, they sacrificed their children by fire, and thus, by a horrid perversion of the original revelation of a Redeemer, they "gave their first-born for their transgression, the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls." Micah vi. 7. This temple of their god, in which they took refuge, proved "a refuge of lies," and they were miserably burnt in the house of their *fire-god*. Let Christians rejoice that the "name of the Lord, is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe."

and commanding his army to do the same, he marches up to Mount Zalmon, where grew a grove of trees, and cutting down a bow, he laid it on his shoulder and brought it to the fort. The rest did the same, and when they had laid the boughs together, Abimelech set them on fire; by which about a thousand men and women were destroyed.

This success encouraged Abimelech to attack the city of Thebez, which he took by storm: but there being a strong tower in the city, the inhabitants fled thither, and maintained it for some time against all the force of Abimelech; which so irritated the impatient conqueror, that pursuing his fate, he came near the tower to encourage his men, and facilitate the taking it by his presence; but pressing too near the door, with a design to have set it on fire, a woman from above cast down a piece of a millstone upon his head, which fractured his skull.\* Abimelech, finding himself mortally wounded, called hastily to his armour-bearer, and commanded him to dispatch him, that it might not be said he died by the hand of a woman.† His servant obeyed him, and the report of his death was no sooner rumoured among the troops than they dispersed: thus were Abimelech and the Shechemites mutual scourges to each other, and Jotham's curse was accomplished in the fate of both.

Tola, the son of Phua, uncle by the father's side to Abimelech, of the tribe of Issachar, was appointed ruler or judge of Israel in his stead. Of whom nothing is recorded, but that he governed Israel twenty-three years.

To him succeeded Jair of Gilead, who reigned twenty-two years. After which, God, being provoked by the

\* *Skull.* The retributions of Providence deserve notice. It is remarkable that Abimelech, who slew his numerous brethren on a stone, was himself destroyed by the falling of a stone on his head.

† *Woman.* This circumstance, however, history has recorded, and it was well remembered by the Israelites—hence Joab refers to it, 2 Sam. iii. 21. The ignominy which men wish to avoid by sin, is thereby, frequently, perpetuated.

idolatry of the Israelites, he permitted the Philistines, and the Amorites and Ammonites to over-run the country, as they pleased, for eighteen years : and in the last year the Ammonites bent their whole force against the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. The Israelites, finding themselves unable to resist the vast numbers of their enemies, become sensible of their folly, by which they had provoked God thus to punish them ; and therefore, acknowledging their sin of idolatry, they beg of God to assist them this one time. God upbraids them with their ingratitude, and to increase the pungency of their sorrow, bids them cry to the gods which they had chosen, and try if they can deliver them in the time of their distress. This was a cutting reproof to the Israelites. However, hoping to recover the favour and protection of God, they commence a reform ; for they discarded their idols, and served Jehovah ; who was pleased to accept their repentance, and appear in their behalf.\*

There was, at that time, in the half tribe of Manasseh which settled on the east side of Jordan, a man of note among his people, whose name was Gilead, of the family of that Gilead, the son of Machir, to whom Moses gave the city of Gilead,† from whence the family were called Gileadites. This Gilead had several sons by his wife ; and he had one son by a concubine, whom he named Jephthah. When Gilead's lawful sons arrived at maturity, they thrust out Jephthah, telling him, that not being born in lawful matrimony, he should have no inheritance among them. Jephthah upon this, expecting worse usage, hastened from them, and took up his station in the land of Tob ; which place being very subject to the depredations and military excursions of the enemy, Jephthah

\* *Behalf.* The misery of the people at this time seems to have been uncommonly great, for (speaking after the manner of men,) it is said of Jehovah, that " his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel : " their repentance too, appears to have been extraordinary, for under the government of three successive rulers, we find no more idolatry.

† *Gilead.* See Numb. xxxii. 47.



the rather chose for his residence, being himself naturally brave and forward. In their occasional expeditions against the enemy, he always distinguished himself so that at last he was invited to accept the command of a company of young fellows, with whom he went a foraging.

In this time of frequent skirmishing, the Gileadites being hardly pressed by the Ammonites, resolved upon a war, but wanted a general. Wherefore, at a general meeting of their chiefs, it was agreed upon, that he who should first attack the Ammonites should be their general. Then bethinking themselves of Jephthah, whom they knew to be a man of courage and conduct, they addressed themselves to him, and offered him the command of their army. Jephthah, surprised at this sudden change, asked them what they meant, who had expelled him from his father's house; and whether they could expect any succour from him in their distress? They acknowledged their present distress was the only motive of their application, and repeated their intreaties to him to take the command of their army.

Jephthah, considering the case and temper of the people, who had once used him ill, and probably might do so again, was resolved to be on sure terms with them: "If I go along with you (says he) and succeed against the Ammonites, shall I be your ruler afterwards?" Their necessity was so pressing at this time, that they readily consented, solemnly engaging that he should. Upon this Jephthah went with them, and the people made him captain over them, Jephthah repeating the covenant or agreement between them and him before the Lord in Mizpeh.

Jephthah, having the security he proposed for the establishment of the government upon himself, sends ambassadors to the king of Ammon, to demand the reason of his invading the Israelites. To which the Ammonitish king replied, that the land was his, and that the Israelites, upon their coming out of Egypt, took it from the Ammonites; which now he demanded, or he would oblige them to restore it. Jephthah, by other ambassadors, recites the case from the beginning: That the Is-

raelites, in their passage from Egypt, being refused leave to pass through the countries of Edom and Moab, were forced to make a circuitous march till they came to the land of the Amorites; where they were not only denied a passage but attacked in a hostile manner by the Amoritic king, whom the Israelites defeated in a pitched battle, fairly conquering not only the kingdom of the Amorites, but whatsoever else belonged to Sihon; who, having before taken from the king of Moab, the land now in dispute,\* it fell with the rest, by conquest, from the Amorites to Israel; besides, the title of Israel was now confirmed by a long prescription—the peaceable possession thereof for three hundred years. But these reasons had no weight with the king of Ammon, who immediately marched against the Israelites, and was by them as warmly received. But before the action commenced, Jephthah, the more readily to secure to himself the victory, made this vow to the Lord: “If (saith he) thou wilt give me success against the Ammonites this day, whatsoever cometh forth of mine house to meet me, when I return, I will surely consecrate to the Lord, or I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.”†

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\* *Dispute.* See Numb xxi. 26.

† *Offering.* No one can read Jephthah's vow, and the execution of it, as most translations express and represent it, without horror and amazement. To find a man, and that not a wild Barbarian, but an Israelite, offering in a burnt-offering a young, innocent, and beautiful maid—to find an indulgent fond father burning the fruit of his body, his own child, nay, and his dutiful and obedient child too; the object of his hopes and present comforts—to find him, whom the Apostle lists in the catalogue of the most pious and faithful worthies of the Old Testament, vowing to offer a human sacrifice to God, at the very time in which the Scripture says the Spirit of the Lord was upon him; and putting his vow afterwards in execution, though human sacrifices were hateful to the Lord, and provoked him utterly to destroy the Canaanites, and kindled his indignation against the Israelites, when they brought the king of Moab to the sad necessity of “offering his eldest son for a burnt-offering upon the wall of his city,”—is certainly very puzzling and unaccountable. But it is very strange that translators should have rendered several passages of this vow in favour of such a cruel and barbarous sense; especially

To this victory of Jephthah, a civil war succeeded between the tribe of Ephraim and the tribe of Gilead.

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our translators, who knew that the words could very well admit of a very different and reasonable meaning, as may be seen in the notes they have placed in the margin of the 31st and 40th verses of that chapter. No one can deny, that the word which is rendered *and*, signifies *or*, in a great many places of Scripture: though there are some who say, that the propriety of speech will not admit of translating *or* for *and* in this place. But surely they would not think so, if they had considered, that the words "shall be the Lord's," would be more properly rendered, "shall be consecrated to the Lord;" that is, dedicated and set apart for God's special service, as the Nazarenes were. And that it is in such a case as this, that Jephthah is said to "have done according to his vow," is clear, because it is immediately subjoined, "And she knew no man;" for if she was sacrificed just as she came down from the Mount, this expression is altogether superfluous, because it is plain from her bewailing her virginity for two months, that she had known no man before; and it is very certain she could know no man after. So that it is very natural to understand the words thus; That Jephthah, according to his vow, had set apart his daughter for God's special service, and that she continued unmarried; which will more fully appear, if we consider that the words, which are rendered *to lament*, in the following verse, signify also *to talk with her*.

But against this it is said, that parents had no power to oblige their children to a single life. To which it may be answered, 1. That the objection militates more against the other opinion: for if the want of a right to do a thing, be an argument that *that* thing is not done, then the more degrees of injustice and unlawfulness there are in any thing, the more boldly we may conclude, that it has not been done. So that if it follows that if Jephthah did not oblige his daughter to perpetual virginity, because he had no just power to do so, then it is most evident, that he did not sacrifice her, because such an action was impious and barbarous, and contrary to the laws of God, of Nature, and Humanity.

2. Jephthah's not having a right to oblige his daughter to perpetual virginity, only proves that he should not have done it, and not that he did it not. For he might have thought he had a right, or, out of blind zeal, fancied himself obliged to perform his inconsiderate and unlawful vow; and it is much more reasonable to suppose this, than to imagine him to have been so grossly ignorant, as not to have known the barbarity and impiety of human sacrifices, or so very stupidly zealous, as to have performed so abominable an action, if he could have been capable of vowing it.

But then, 3. It cannot be proved, that fathers had not such a right under the Law. It is plain they had a power to dedicate their children to God's peculiar

The Ephraimites were an ambitious quarrelsome people,

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service, and to oblige them to several things, somewhat unpleasant to flesh and blood. It is likewise plain, that fathers were to determine what was reasonable for their children, while under their care, to vow and promise; because the vows made by such children signified nothing without the father's consent; but that if the father did allow them, "Every vow and bond with which they bound their soul, was to stand," Numb. xxx. 4, 5. From which it appears, that parents might advise their children to reasonable vows, and, with their consent, bind them to any thing that was not unlawful, and that if the father did vow any thing in the name of his child, which the child did not agree to, that then the father was forgiven; as the children were when their vows were disallowed by their father; which is sufficient to answer this objection.

But it is farther said, that if this had been all that Jephthah had vowed, he had not been so much troubled as he was, when, at his return in triumph, his daughter met him; for it is said, "He rent his clothes, and said, Alas! my daughter, thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me." But they who think so, seem to be strangers to the Old Testament notions, and to human nature. It appears from several places in the Old Testament, that the being without children, and consequently perpetual virginity, was looked upon as a curse and reproach; and how desirous men are to see their posterity increase, is very evident. So that it is not surprising to find Jephthah troubled, and rending his clothes, when his only child was to live and die under this reproach; when he saw his family extinct, and himself excluded from all hopes of posterity, and particularly from the hopes of having the Messiah to come of his seed; which was the general hope and desire of all the Israelitish women.

But beside what hath been urged against Jephthah's sacrificing his daughter, what we have before mentioned of translating the word *or* instead of *and*, we may very fairly suppose, that by this vow, Jephthah had regard to the fitness of the subject, or thing vowed for a burnt-offering. So that if what came forth to meet him were not fit for a sacrifice, then it should be offered for a burnt-offering. Now the things, that were not fit for sacrifice, were mankind, and unclean beasts and birds. But though these might not be offered in sacrifice, yet they might be vowed, and afterwards be redeemed with money, at the valuation of the priest, or not redeemed, at the vower's choice; and if not redeemed, might be sold, as appears by the Law, Levit. xviii. 21.

It hath been objected, that Josephus, Philo, and many of the fathers, are for the common notion of Jephthah's sacrificing his daughter. It is very possible that the fathers believed so on the testimony of these two Jews; and so should we too, if they had certain tradition on which to build their assertion. But since they want this, it is to be looked upon as their private opinion, for which we are to have no



and this was not the first\* instance of their ill temper, which formerly proceeded no further than words: but now the mutinous Ephraimites carry it further, and with as little reason. For assembling their forces together, they came upon Jephthah, and demanded why he fought the Ammonites without them? Jephthah very calmly expostulates the matter with them, and throws the blame wholly upon themselves, who refused to come to his assistance when the Ammonites attacked him. The unreasonable Ephraimites were so enraged at this just re-

greater value than the reasons which they give for it deserve. The fathers were too much wedded to the visions and fancies of the Jews, and especially of Josephus and Philo; which often betrayed them into the belief of several ridiculous whims, and particularly of that senseless opinion of the angels begetting giants on the women that were before the Deluge; which they took to be the meaning of these words in Genesis, "The sons of God went in unto the daughters of men." Gen. vi. 4.

In Judg. xi. 40, we read, That the daughters of Israel went yearly to *lament* Jephthah's daughter; but the margin more properly says, to *talk with her*, in which Pagnine, Arius Montanus, Tremellius, and Junius agree; and by this version of *talking with her*, may reasonably be meant that they went yearly to visit her, after her being dedicated to the service of God. From which likewise may very well be inferred, That she was alive long after her father had performed his vow upon her, and after his death too; for he reigned over Israel but six years.

Jephthah's sacrificing his daughter is by our ingenious countryman Dr. Brown, placed among his *Vulgar Errors*, where he very learnedly refutes it by the authority of Scripture and Reason. In fine, from what hath been said, it is reasonable to conclude, that Jephthah did not sacrifice his daughter; and that part of ver. 31, of Judg. xi. "shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering," ought thus to be translated, "I will consecrate it to the Lord, or I will offer it up for a burnt-offering," according to the circumstances of the person or creature that first should meet him.

\* *Not the first.* Though Gideon had called the Ephraimites to assist in the pursuit of the Midianites, and had given them the advantage of plunder, and the honour of taking Oreb and Zeeb, two princes of Midian, yet because they were not called at first to the battle, they took upon them to reprehend Gideon very sharply for the affront; which he, like a prudent man, took patiently, and appeased them with good words, extolling their valour, and applauding their success.

proach, that, having nothing to urge in vindication of themselves, and depending on their numbers, they threatened to burn his house over his head. Jephthah, finding it to no purpose to reason longer with them, musters what force he could in so short a time, and being flushed with the late success, resolves to fight the Ephraimites; who had no reason to despise the Gileadites by calling them fugitives of Ephraim; nor did they need this reproach to rouse or whet their courage, especially under the conduct of their valiant general Jephthah. The armies join, and after a short, but sharp dispute, the fortune of the battle declared for Gilead, Ephraim being obliged to fly. Jephthah, resolving to make sure work, and prevent the Ephraimites from disturbing him again, secures all the passes on the river Jordan, which those Ephraimites who had escaped in the fight, must necessarily pass in their way home: so that as fast as any of them came thither, if, upon examination, they owned themselves Ephraimites, they were put to the sword: if any denied, they gave them the test, which was to pronounce the word SHIBBOLETH, which they could not do, their provincial pronunciation of the word being SIBBOLETH, and which small variation cost them their lives. In this action and pursuit there were slain forty-two thousand of the Ephraimites.

Jephthah, having thus successfully rid himself both of his foreign and domestic enemies, spent the rest of his life in peace, which, however, was not long, for the whole time of his administration was but six years.

Jephthah was succeeded by Ibzan of Bethlehem, of whom there is nothing more recorded, than that he had thirty sons and thirty daughters, and that he reigned seven years.

Elon, a Zebulonite, succeeded Ibzan, who governed Israel ten years; and after him Abdon, a Pirathonite,

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\* *Sibboleth*. Which signifies a stream, water-course, or falling of waters.

ruled eight years. All that is said of this last is, that he had forty sons and thirty grandsons.

In these three reigns Israel enjoyed a peace of twenty-three years; in which time becoming wanton, they returned to the practice of their former transgressions, by which God was again provoked to punish them, which he did, in delivering them into the hands of the Philistines.

Samson, who was the last of those who are accounted extraordinary\* judges of Israel, is supposed to have been born about the time of Jephthah's† victory. His birth being attended with unusual circumstances, we shall relate the particulars. Samson was the son of Manoah, a Danite,‡ whose wife having been long barren, the Angel of the Lord appeared to her when she was alone, and informed her that she should conceive and bear a son, directing her how to manage and order herself while she was pregnant, by forbearing wine or strong drink, and all unclean meats; and that after the child should be born, he should be treated as a Nazarite, that his head must not be shaved,§ and that he should prove the Deliverer of Israel from the

\* *Extraordinary.* That is, Judges or Deliverers raised up in an extraordinary manner. Others were raised up at the time when they were wanted; but Samson was promised for a deliverer before he was born. Therefore because there were many extraordinary things that happened, both leading to, and attending his birth, it is very proper to trace his history from the beginning.

† *Jephthah's.* Allowing Samson to have been born at this time, he must be at least thirty years old at the death of Abdon, his immediate predecessor; and when he took upon him the administration.

‡ *Danite.* The tribe of Dan bordering upon the Philistines, was most exposed to their incursions and invasions, and therefore God out of that tribe chose Samson for a judge and avenger. Which is very agreeable to the prophecy of Jacob, when he blessed his sons a little before his death. "Dan shall be a Serpent by the way, an Adder by the path, biting the heels of the horse, so that his rider shall fall backwards."

§ *Shaved.* Long hair was very much esteemed among the Jews, and here Samson's mother was forbid to cut his hair, because he was to be a Nazarite unto the Lord, that is, dedicated to the Lord, the sanctity of his consecration consisting in his long and un-cut hair, which was a token not only of beauty,

oppression of their neighbours. The woman acquaints her husband with this interview between herself and the Angel; and he, being not so much surprised as overjoyed at the hopes of having a son, had the curiosity to see this heavenly messenger himself, his pretence for it being to be further instructed in the management of the child when he should be born. God graciously answered his request, and the Angel again appeared, repeating to the expecting couple the former instructions. The Angel appearing in human shape, Manoah took him to be a Man of God, and pressed him to accept of an entertainment. The Angel, however, declined this, but advised him to express his gratitude in a burnt-offering to the Lord. Manoah, accordingly, prepares a kid, and a meat-offering, and offered it upon a rock unto God; and then the Angel, in a wonderful manner, discovered himself, which before he refused to do at Manoah's importunity; for when the flame ascended from the altar, the Angel ascended in it and disappeared. Manoah, alarmed and terrified, now began to repent his curiosity, and both he and his wife prostrate themselves on the ground; and, considering themselves as lost, he cried out, "We shall surely die, because we have dared to see God." But the good woman, armed with stronger faith and courage, argues with her timorous desponding husband, and tells him, That if the Lord had intended to destroy them, he would not have accepted an offering from them, nor have condescended to communicate such a blessing to them as he had promised.

According to the appointed time, the woman was delivered of a son, whom, from the Angel's appearing the second time to her, she called Samson. It is reasonable to suppose, that Samson's parents observed the directions

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but of majesty and veneration. As to the cutting off his hair afterwards by Dalilah, it was done in a fraudulent manner and with a hostile intent, not only to deprive him of his hair, but of his strength, that so they might destroy him. Besides it may be said to be done in judgment upon him for suffering himself to be deluded by an infidel harlot.



given by the Angel for his nursing and erudition; for while a child, the Lord blessed him so that he grew to a wonderful strength: and while he was but a youth, the Spirit of the Lord began to move him\* at certain times to exert himself in actions of strength and activity, in the old camp† of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Samson having arrived at man's estate, determined to travel and see the country; and coming to Timnah, a city belonging to the Philistines, he happened to cast his eyes on a beautiful Philistine, who so captivated the young hero, that he could not live without her. But, in duty to his father and mother, he would not marry without their consent. The fond parents expostulated with their son on the unreasonableness of the match, in offering to marry into an uncircumcised family. But the amorous youth,

\* *Move him.* This is an Hebrew phrase, and is often used upon particular occasions, where God very signally appeared in the action; but in none oftener than in the history of Samson's administration: for upon every emergency it is said, "The Spirit of the Lord came upon him." Hence St. Ambrose observes on Luke i. 17. "He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias;" these two, the Spirit, and Power, (which is Fortitude) are always joined together: for all fortitude, whether in attempting or suffering, is from the Holy Ghost, who inspires us. Thus John the Baptist is said to have "the Spirit and Power of Elias:" And the Angel Gabriel said to the Blessed Virgin, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the most High shall overshadow thee." And our Blessed Lord tells his Apostles, Acts i. 8, "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you." Whence we see power is always attributed to the Holy Ghost; and therefore the Septuagint very aptly in this place turns it, "The Spirit of the Lord began to go along with him." Judg. xiii. 25. That is, always inspired and stimulated him on to the performance of godly and heroic actions. "The Spirit of Fortitude was with him from the Lord to strengthen him;" saith the Chaldee paraphrase.

† *Old camp.* This camp of Dan was probably that place, where the Danites pitched their camp in their expedition and enterprise against Laish, Judg. xviii. 11. For it is not at all likely, that the Philistines, who had the Israelites at that time under an entire subjection, should suffer them to have any standing camp. And, if the reader looks back a little, this is another argument, that the affair of Micah, and of the Danites' expedition, were both transacted before the time of Samson, though, by the compilers of the Bible, they are related after it, as the story of Job is.

consulting his passion more than his religion, was so pressing in his request to his parents, that their indulgence was not proof against it; therefore to gratify him, they accompanied him to Timnah to see her, and to treat with her parents about the marriage.

As they were on their journey, Samson being at a distance from the company, a young lion came with great fury out of the vineyards of Timnah and attacked him. Upon which the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, so that he slew the lion with as much ease as if it had been a kid. After this action he went on, and overtook his parents, but acquainted them not with this adventure of the lion. Being arrived at Timnah, the match was soon concluded upon; and not long after, Samson and his parents take another journey to solemnize the nuptials; but in their way to Timnah, Samson, remembering the place where he had encountered the lion, his curiosity led him to see what was become of the carcass; when, to his great surprise and amazement, he found in it a swarm of bees, with some honey: of which, taking some in his hands, he went on eating, and when he overtook his parents he gave them some of it, but did not tell them whence he had it.

Being arrived at Timnah, Samson entertained the relations on both sides for seven days; and to grace the nuptials, his wife's kindred brought thirty of their principal youth to bear him company. To these young men, Samson, during the wedding feast, proposed a riddle, which was this, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." He gave them seven days to expound the riddle, upon condition that if they expounded it, he would give them thirty change of garments; but if they did not, they should give him the same number. The young men, not knowing how to expound the riddle, applied themselves to his wife, and persuaded her to discover the meaning of it. After much importunity, she prevailed upon her husband, who was so weak as to trust her with it, and she immediately told it to those young men, who came to Samson at the end of the seven days, and said; "What is sweeter

“than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?” Samson was convinced that his wife had discovered the secret; for he knew he had told it to no other person; and therefore to let them know he was sensible of foul play in the matter, he with indignation replied; “If you had not ploughed with my heifer, you could not have expounded my riddle.” Then yielding his wager lost, he prepares to pay it; and going to Ascalon, a city of the Philistines, he slew thirty men, whose garments he gave to those who had expounded the riddle. And being incensed against the Philistines for this unfair dealing about the riddle, he left Timnah, and returned to his father’s house. But though he had entertained a just resentment against the Philistines, yet he retained a fondness for his wife, to whose weakness he did not so much impute the discovery of the riddle, as to the fraud of her countrymen. Some time after he returned to Timnah to visit his wife, and as a token of his affection, he brought a kid with him for a present; and preparing to retire to her chamber, and sleep with her as before, her father objected, urging as an excuse, that because he had slighted and deserted her, he had given her in marriage to one of his companions,\* but that if he thought proper, her younger sister, who was more beautiful, might become his wife.

This was an additional provocation, for which Samson intends a sharp revenge, and which he executed thus. He found means to catch three hundred foxes,† which he

\* *Companions.* It may be supposed to be one of the thirty whom they had provided to bear him company at the wedding; and, it is very probable, as a reward of the treachery in discovering the secret of the riddle.

† *Foxes.* The catching of so many foxes (a very cunning and wary creature) is very ludicrously questioned by some. But if they would consider, that what Samson did in this case, was by divine inspiration, and that in every other great action of his, “The Spirit of God, is said, to come mightily upon him,” their mouths might be stopped. It is plain from Scripture that Judea, and especially that part of it which was the portion of the tribe of Dan, (to which Samson belonged) abounded with foxes; for the Septuagint render Judg. i. 35. “Salebim, in which are foxes,” but foxes are left out in our translation. And yet, incredulous as some would seem to be of transactions mentioned in Holy Scriptures, they readily admit the almost incredible accounts of profane authors. Julius Cæsar is said to

ties two and two together by the tails, with lighted torches to them, and drove the foxes into the standing corn, by which means he burnt not only the corn, but the vineyards and olive-trees. The Philistines understanding it was Samson, son-in-law to the Timnite who had done this mischief, because his father-in-law had taken away his wife, came in revenge to Timnah, and burnt Samson's wife and her father. This gave Samson occasion of quarrelling with the Philistines again, and he was so far from concealing his resentment or using any stratagem to be revenged on them, that he openly declared he would have satisfaction; which he forthwith obtained in a great slaughter of them.

After this action, Samson well knowing that he had provoked the Philistines to the highest degree, took up his residence, for greater security, in the top of the rock Etam: which, when the Philistines understood, they marched into Judah, and encamped there, demanding Samson of the inhabitants, that they might have satisfaction of him for the wrong he had done them. The men of Judah, dreading the consequence of this invasion, immediately detach three thousand men of their tribe to go and take Samson, saying to him, "Didst thou not know that we were subject to the Philistines, why then hast thou provoked them so much?" Adding that they were come to seize and deliver him to the Philistines. Samson knew his own strength, but would not employ it against his countrymen, only obliging them by oath not to

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have produced at one shew four hundred lions. Probus, the Emperor, a thousand leopards, a thousand stags, a thousand bears, &c. Heligobalus, a thousand weazles, &c. as Lampridius and Vopiscus testify in their lives, and Pliny, l. 8. c. 16. How strange is it then, that Samson's getting three hundred foxes together, should seem so extravagant to any one? But besides the satisfaction Samson might take in expressing his resentment thus on the Philistines, he may reasonably be thought to have another end in it; for by catching so many foxes he secured the vineyards of his own people from these mischievous creatures, so that this injury to the Philistines, was a benefit to them. The common fox, *Canis vulpes*, as well as the jackal or *vulpes aureas*, are both very numerous in Palestine. The Hebrew word shugnai, or shual, may be translated for either.—See Hasselquist's Travels, and Solomon's Song, ii. 15.



unite with the Philistines against him, he gave them leave to bind him; upon which they brought him to the place where the Philistines lay encamped; who, seeing him brought bound, thought they were now sure of him; and came forth, shouting for joy, to receive him. But before they could lay hands on him, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him so powerfully, that he broke the cords from his arms with as much ease as if they had been burnt flax; and looking about him for a weapon, he could find no better than the jaw-bone of an ass; however, being inspired, he, with that contemptible instrument, dispatched a thousand of the Philistines. The violent exertion used in this action, rendered him so extremely thirsty, that he was ready to faint, and being in a place where no water could be procured, he thus addressed himself to the Lord: "Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant; and shall I die with thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" God heard his complaint, and miraculously gratified the champion's thirst, by a supply of water from a rock, which never before produced any moisture; he clave a hollow rock,\* called

\* *Rock.* Vatabius, Junius, and Tremellius, have remarked, that all the versions, except the Chaldee paraphrase, have transformed the place where Samson killed the thousand Philistines, which is called *Lehi*, into a *jaw-bone*; and a *hollow rock*, which was in that place, into a *hollow tooth*, which was in the jaw-bone: *Judg.* xv. 19, translating, "God clave a hollow place, which was in the Jaw, and there came water thereout;" whereas they should have translated, "God clave a hollow rock called *Mactes*, which was at *Lehi*," &c. The same rock, *Mactes*, is mentioned in *Zephaniah* i. 11, where our translation renders it the *low place*. It was called *Mactes*, because it had the figure of a mortar; the Chaldee paraphrase says, that it was situated near the brook *Kedron*, or near *Tiberias*, according to the allegorical comments of the Jews. Nor did Josephus the historian understand this text otherwise, when he remarks, *Antiq. l. 7. c. 10.* "That God having heard the prayer of Samson, made a fountain to spring in a rock, which did send out abundance of sweet and clear water." And those who have travelled through Palestine, assure us that this fountain remains to this day. *St. Jerome* tells us, he saw it; and *Michael Glycas*, who lived about the year 1120, says That it was to be seen at that time in the suburbs of *Eleutheropolis*, and that it was called *The Fountain of the Jaw*.

Mactes, which was at Lehi, and water plentifully flowed from it; of which Samson having drank, his spirits were immediately revived.

Samson's next exploit was at Gaza, another city of the Philistines, whither, invited by curiosity, or desire of the Philistine women, he went, and took up his lodging at a house of public entertainment. He was not long concealed here; for the inhabitants of the place having notice of him, beset the house, and watching for him all night at the gate of the city, concluded they should seize him in the morning, and then they would dispatch him. Samson, being informed of their design upon him, lay still till midnight; and then rising, took the gates of the city, with the two posts and bars, and laying them on his shoulders, carried them to the top of a hill which looks toward Hebron; and so escaped the danger that threatened him. But a more fatal disaster than this shortly befel him: For falling in love with a beautiful woman who dwelt in the Vale of Sorek, whose name was Dalilah, he was so captivated with her charms, that he paid little regard to his own safety. The princes of the Philistines observing Samson's fondness, took advantage of it, and addressing themselves to Dalilah, promise to give her, each of them, eleven\* hundred shekels of silver, if she could entice him to discover to her wherein his great strength lay, that so they might bind and punish him for the great mischief he had done them. So valuable a bribe easily prevailed with the woman to betray her lover; who, after much solicitation and importunity, informed her, that he had been a Nazarite to God from his birth, and that no razor had ever yet come upon his head; but if he were to be shaven, his strength would be no more than that of a common man. Dalilah, having thus ex-

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\* *Eleven*, &c. The number of these princes of the Philistines, is supposed to be five, from the five chief cities, viz. Accaron, Ascalon, Azoth, Gaza, and Gath, 1 Sam. vi. 17. So that five times eleven hundred, or five thousand five hundred shekels of silver, each in value fifteen-pence, would amount to about three hundred and forty-three pounds fifteen shillings.

torted from him the fatal secret, sent for the princes of the Philistines, to come to her, assuring them that he had revealed to her the true secret of his strength. They accordingly come, and bring the money they had promised her; and she, having lulled him to sleep, as his head lay on her lap, a man whom she had provided, shaved off the seven locks of his head; and then rousing him, she said, "The Philistines be upon thee Samson!" He, not knowing what was done, thought to stretch himself, as he used to do, for as yet he knew not that the Lord was departed from him; but he too soon discovered it by the loss of his strength. The Philistines seeing him now really disabled, seized him immediately, and to make sure of him, they put out his eyes, and bringing him to Gaza, they fettered him, and obliged him to work in the prison.

Some time after, the Philistines kept a day of rejoicing for the victory obtained over their potent adversary, and offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving to their idol Dagon,\* in his temple. When they had feasted awhile, and were become merry, they called for Samson to make sport; upon which he was brought from the prison, and being placed between the two pillars that supported the roof, they made themselves merry with him. Beside the great conflux of people of all sorts, who were in the house of Dagon at this solemnity, there were about three thousand on the roof, who came to be spectators of Samson's misery.† By this time his hair was somewhat grown;

\* *Dagon*. This Dagon was the common idol of the sea coasts, having the form of a man from the navel upwards, and downwards of a fish; from which the word is derived.

† *Misery*. Houses in the East were built round a court, with cloysters. Samson was in the court or area, and the flat roof of the surrounding buildings, as well as all the windows were filled with spectators. Dr. Shaw, in his Travels, says, "I have often seen hundreds of people diverted in this manner upon the roof of the Dey's palace at Algiers; which, like many more of the same quality and denomination, hath an advanced cloyster over against the gate of the palace, (Esther v. 1.) made in the fashion of a large pent-house, supported only by one or two contiguous pillars in the front, or centre. In such open structures as these, the great

and it is probable his strength might begin to return : However, whether it did or not in that manner, it is very likely that these indignities, offered him by the Philistines, provoked him to the highest degree ; wherefore persuading the lad who guided him, to place him so that he might feel both the pillars on which the house rested, on pretence of leaning on them to rest himself, he, with great earnestness prayed to God to strengthen him but this one time, that he might be avenged on the Philistines for the loss of his eyes. God heard his prayers, and gave him such an accession of strength, that taking hold of the two pillars with both his hands, he bowed himself with all his might, and at the same time saying, " Let me die with the Philistines," he exerted his strength in such a wonderful manner, that forcing the pillars from their bases, the house fell down with a dreadful crash on the vast assembled multitude who were in it : so that Samson had a full revenge on his enemies, and put an end to his own miserable condition ; slaying more at his death, than in the height of his prosperity.

Thus died Samson, who is said to have judged Israel twenty years ; and was rather a scourge to the Philistines, than a deliverer of the Israelites. Yet he may be said to have begun to deliver Israel in this last action, though it cost him his life. When his relations heard of his death, they came and brought him to his father's sepulchre, between Zorah and Eshtaol, where they buried him.\*

After the death of Samson, the administration of the government of Israel seems to have devolved upon Eli,

officers of state transact their public offices and distribute justice. Here likewise they have public entertainments, as the lords of the Philistines had in the house of Dagon. Upon a supposition therefore, that in the house of Dagon, there was a cloistered structure of this kind, the pulling down the front or centre pillars only which supported it, would be attended with the like catastrophe that happened to the Philistines."

\* The example of Samson cannot be pleaded in defence of suicide. He was a public person, the declared enemy of the Philistines, and raised up of God to punish them for the oppression of his people. It was not the destruction of his own life that he sought on this occasion, but that of Israel's enemies, and as a magistrate



who was then high-priest. In the beginning of his reign was born Samuel the prophet, the son of Elkanah, a Levite, descended\* from Korah. He lived in the city of Ramah, which belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, with his two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. The latter of whom had children, but the first had none. Elkanah, according to the custom, went up to Shiloh once a year, to worship, and sacrifice to the Lord, taking his two wives and his children with him; where, after he had made his offerings, he gave presents to both his wives; but Hannah being his best beloved, he gave her a double share of his favour. This occasioned a difference between the two wives, and Peninnah, priding herself in her children, reproached Hannah for her sterility. Her husband endeavours to comfort her; but Hannah seeks her consolation from above, addressing herself earnestly in prayer to the Lord, and vowing at the same time, that if he would bless her with a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord all the days of his life, and that no razor should come upon his head. Eli the priest, who was near her, perceiving her lips move, but not hearing her speak, supposed she was intoxicated with wine, and chid her for it; but finding himself mistaken, he turned his reproof into a blessing, praying to God to hear her petition. Being returned to Ramah, she conceived, and was in due time delivered of a son, whom she named Samuel, because she had asked him of God; which his name implies.

and soldier, he "counted not his own life dear, so that he might finish his heroic course" with triumph. The miraculous power with which he was again endued from on high, seems fully to justify this extraordinary action.

Herein also we may discern a remarkable emblem of the Great Deliverer, the Saviour of the world, who destroyed Satan's kingdom as Samson did Dagon's temple; who, when his arms were stretched out on the cross, as Samson's to the two pillars, gave a fatal convulsion to "the gates of hell," and "through death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Heb. ii. 14, 15.

\* *Levite, descended, &c.* Elkanah was descended from that Korah, who in Moses' time, for his rebellion in the wilderness, was swallowed up by the gaping earth, and all that he had with him, Numb. xvi. except his sons, Numb. xxvi. 11, from the eldest of which, named Assir, the genealogy is carried down to Samuel, in 1 Chron. vi. from *ver.* 22, to 28.

Hannah, having weaned her little son, according to her promise, brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh, with an offering, acquainting Eli that she was the woman, who some time since had prayed to the Lord for a child, and that she came to perform her vow, which was to dedicate him to the service of the Lord. Eli, upon this, gave thanks to the Lord, for having heard and answered Hannah's prayer; and Hannah, in a holy rhapsody, did the same. Elkanah and Hannah, having performed their vow, prepare to return, and Eli pronouncing a blessing upon them said, "The Lord give thee seed of this woman, for the loan which is lent to the Lord," meaning Samuel; whom they left behind them with Eli, who put on him a linen Ephod, and he served in the house of the Lord, as Eli had directed him. After that, once a year, till he grew up, his mother, when she came up to offer the yearly sacrifice, made him a little coat, and brought it to him.

Eli, the priest, had two sons, who were extremely wicked; for, valuing themselves upon the authority and dignity of the priesthood, they domineered over the men, and debauched the women. And to such a degree of insolence had they arrived, that not content with the portion of the flesh of the sacrifice, which God, in the law had assigned to them, they would seize what they liked best, and at what time they pleased. By these means, the service of God grew contemptible in the eyes of the people; who were indifferent whether they offered or not. But how heinous soever the sins of the priests might be, they did not excuse the people from guilt in neglecting the service of the Lord.

Eli himself had often been informed of the wickedness of his sons, yet did not restrain or punish them as he, who was both their father and a magistrate, ought to have done, giving them only a slight reproof, which was so far from dissuading, that they still persisted in their wicked practices. At last a Man of God\* came to Eli, with a mes-

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\* *Man of God.* Who this man of God was, that brought this unwelcome message to Eli, is very uncertain. Tremellius and Junius in their notes upon the place take him to be Samuel. Which is very strange, and very unlikely to

sage that threatened him and his household with ruin, for his mild but careless administration : first upbraiding him with ingratitude for slighting the honour done his family, by investing the priesthood in it; threatening his sons, Hophni and Phineas, with death, which he foretells shall happen at one and the same. And to shew Eli the wretched poverty into which his posterity should be plunged, he added, That every one that should be left in his house should come and crouch to a more faithful priest, whom the Lord would set up, for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread; and should say, " Put me, I pray thee, " into one of the priests' office, that I may have a peice of " bread to eat."

Soon after this, the Lord gives Eli another denunciation of his judgment by a younger messenger. Samuel being lodged in the further part of the tabernacle, among the Levites, the Lord in the night called him by his name; who, as the manner was, answered, " Here am I;" and starting up, ran to Eli's apartment, supposing he had called him: but when Eli told him he had not called him, he went and lay down again. This was repeated three times; and Samuel began at last to be positive with Eli, that he certainly did call him. This roused Eli, and led him to think there must be something extraordinary in it; which thought he communicated to Samuel, bidding him retire to his bed again, and directed him, that if the Lord should call him again, he should say, " Speak " Lord; thy servant heareth." As Eli expected, so it happened; and Samuel did as he was directed. Then said the Lord to Samuel, " All that I have spoken con- " cerning Eli and his house I will perform; for I have " assured him that I will judge his house for ever, for the " iniquity to which he is privy: because his sons made

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be true, for Samuel was then too young, and in the 1st. verse of 3d. ch. 1st. of Samuel, he is set forth as one not yet acquainted with the voice of God; and also, that the Lord, when he had spoken to Samuel, tells him as a thing he knew not before, that he had denounced a judgment against Eli and his house. It is certain, that it was a very dark time: there was no open vision, no certain known prophes., such as Moses had been before, and as Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, and others were afterwards.

“ themselves vile, and he did not restrain them : there-  
 “ fore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the ini-  
 “ quity of Eli’s house shall not be purged with sacrifice,  
 “ nor offering for ever.”\*

This sentence was so terrible, even to Samuel, who had no share in it, that he was afraid to inform Eli ; but Eli now thoroughly awakened by the message he had before received, and the apprehension he now entertained that the Lord had revealed something like it to Samuel, obliged him to repeat what the Lord had said to him. Samuel obeys, and tells him the very worst. To which afflicted Eli humbly submitted, saying ; “ It is the Lord, “ let him do what seemeth him good.”

And now, to the great comfort of Israel, God was pleased to appear again in Shiloh, revealing himself to Samuel there. For as Samuel grew up, both in stature as a man, and in grace as a man of God, the Lord was

\* The example of Eli suggests an affecting lesson to Parents, Magistrates, and Ministers. In each of these stations, important duties are required, for the due performance of which they are responsible, and the rule laid down in the case of Eli, will be found by experience to be generally adopted in the conduct of Divine Providence. “ Them that honour me, I will honour ; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.” A large degree of tender affection is due to children ; but if we resign our authority to them, and permit them, unrestrained, to follow their corrupt inclinations, we are chargeable with the guilt of provoking God, betraying his cause, and bringing a curse, both on ourselves and them. It is true that the most pious parents cannot bestow grace upon their children ; but they may and ought to “ restrain” them, when they begin to “ make themselves vile,” and not be too indulgent, lest they make themselves accessory to their crimes and their ruin. Human nature is depraved, and education must be adapted to it as such ; much instruction, caution, and advice, is necessary. The vicious inclinations of youth, their love of vanity and of vain company, must be opposed and repressed, and moderate restraint and correction must be employed. (Prov. xiii. 24, and xxiii. 14.) Without this care, the pretended fondness of parents is, in reality, cruelty of the worst kind. And though, in some few cases, the faithful discharge of parental duties is not attended with the usual success ; yet, when the children of good men, are, like Eli’s, “ sons of Belial, who know not the Lord,” it will generally be found that there has been some gross carelessness and deficiency in their education. “ Train up a child,” said the wisest of men, “ in the way he should go ; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Prov. xxii. 6.



with him, and accomplished whatsoever he spoke by him ; so that all Israel knew, from one end of the land to the other, that Samuel was established as a faithful prophet to the Lord.

The Israelites being again favoured with a prophet, promised to themselves great things, concluding that whatever they undertook would succeed ; and being animated with this thought, they were inclined to make an effort for shaking off the Philistine yoke. Wherefore, intending to give them battle, they encamped in a place, which afterwards, upon better success, was called Eben-Ezer. The Philistines sat down by Aphek, a city of Judah, and in a short time the armies joined ; but the Israelites, instead of victory, find the judgments of God, denounced against priest and people, ready to fall on them ; for in the action they lost four thousand of their men. The rest making an orderly retreat to their camp, the Elders began to consider what might be the cause of this defeat ; and fondly supposing it to be for want of having the Ark with them, they resolve to carry it with them in all their future expeditions. They then sent messengers to Shiloh, for Hophni and Phineas, the priests, to bring the Ark into the camp : which they forthwith did ; and when the Israelites saw the Ark brought into the camp, they gave such a shout, as made the earth ring : which so disheartened the Philistines, that they were on the brink of despair, especially when they heard the true cause of this exultation.

The Israelites, on the other hand, were as presuming, as the Philistines were dejected. For concluding themselves secure under the protection of the Ark, and not in the least questioning success, they again offer battle to the Philistines ; who engaging, slew thirty thousand of their foot, among whom were Hophni and Phineas ; put the rest to flight ; and (which was the most distressing circumstance of all) the Ark of God was taken. One of the soldiers, of the tribe of Benjamin, seeing the day lost, made his escape from the field of battle, and came running to Shiloh, with his clothes rent, and earth upon his

head; which, in those countries, were emblems of extreme sorrow for the greatest losses and misfortunes.

Though Eli had offended the Lord greatly, by his remiss and careless administration, yet he had a religious concern for the safety of Israel, and a deep veneration for the Ark of God. On this account, therefore, he went and sat at the gate to hear (for he could not see) how affairs went: while he was sitting here, the Benjamite who escaped in the fight, having informed the citizens what had happened, there was a dreadful outcry among them. Whereupon, Eli, asking what was the meaning of that tumult, the Benjamite soldier was brought to him, who told him that the Israelites were routed; that his sons were in the number of the slain; and that the Ark of the Lord was taken. Eli kept his seat till the last piece of news was related, but then, his spirits failing, he fell backwards from his seat; and being heavy as well as aged, his neck was broken by the fall, and he died, having judged Israel forty years. The wife of Phineas, who was pregnant, and very near her time, hearing of the melancholy death of her father and her husband, and of the loss of the Ark, fell into labour; and being delivered of a son, she, with her dying breath, named him "Ichabod;" which signifies, "No glory;" adding, as the reason of giving the child this name, "The glory is departed from Israel;" for so she justly interpreted the capture of the Ark.

The Philistines having cleared the field, and carried off the plunder, brought the Ark to Ashdod, and placed it in the temple of Dagon, near to the idol; which, the next morning, they found fallen down upon his face before the Ark of the Lord. They set him up however in his place, and next day coming in again, they not only found him fallen to the ground, but his head and the palms of his hands were broken off, and lying on the threshold, his lower part only being left intire. Whence a superstitious custom arose among the Philistines, that neither the priests nor the people would tread upon the threshold.

And now to convince these idolaters, that the cause was

no longer between the Philistines and the Israelites, but between God and Dagon; the Lord laid his heavy judgments on Ashdod, and all the coast towns thereabouts; afflicting the people with secret diseases, and at the same time destroying the country by the mice. The people of Ashdod were sensible that this was a judgment from the God of Israel, for taking and detaining the Ark; therefore consulting what to do, the princes of the Philistines, partly to redress the complaints of the Ashdodites, but chiefly to carry the Ark about in triumph, send it to Gath, where the same judgments pursue the detainers of it. Therefore they removed it to Ekron, the inhabitants of which no sooner saw it, but they exclaimed, "They have brought about the Ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people."

While the Ark was here, as they conjectured, a deadly plague attended the people; wherefore calling the priests, they resolved to send the Ark away, but could not immediately determine on the proper method of doing it. The priests advised them not to send it away empty, but to prepare a trespass-offering, for an atonement of their sacrilege, which was to consist of five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the princes of the Philistines; hoping, that by thus acknowledging the glory of the God of Israel, he would deliver them from the punishments he had inflicted on them: for "Why, (said the priests) should you be obstinate as the Egyptians were, to your own destruction?" Then directing them to provide a new cart, and two milch kine, that had never been yoked, and fasten them to the cart, without their calves, they bid them lay the Ark on the cart, and put the golden emerods and mice in a coffer by the side of the Ark, and send them away: but cautioned them strictly to observe which way the cart went; for if it went by the way of Bethshemeth, they might conclude, that it was the God of Israel, who had plagued them; but if it went not that way, they should look upon all these judgments merely as common accidents.

The Philistines sending the Ark away in this manner; the kine that drew it went on, lowing, directly to Bethshemeth; the five princes of the Philistines followed at a

respectful distance to see what would become of it, who, when they saw it arrive safely at Bethshemeth, returned to Ekron. The Bethshemites, who were reaping in the valley, seeing the Ark, were overjoyed. The kine having drawn the cart into the field of Joshua, the Bethshemite, stood still there by a great stone, called the stone of Abel; which the Levites\* observing, they took down the Ark of the Lord, and the coffer that was with it, and laid them upon the great stone. Then, cleaving the wood of the cart for fuel, they offered the kine for a burnt-offering to the Lord. But some of the Bethshemites, whether moved by joy or curiosity, took the liberty of looking into the Ark, contrary† to the Law; for which presumption the Lord slew seventy‡ of them, which so terrified the rest, that they cried out, “Who is able to stand before this “Holy Lord God? And to whom shall he go from us?” This made them desirous of removing the Ark; they therefore sent to Kirjath-jearim, to acquaint them that the Philistines had sent back the Ark of the Lord, and desired them to come and fetch it. Accordingly they came, and conveyed the Ark to the house of Abinadab on the hill, whose son Eleazer was consecrated to keep it, and where it abode twenty years.

Samuel, having upon the death of Eli, and the loss of the Ark, taken upon him the administration, governed Israel twenty years; when, finding in the people a disposition to repent and return to the Lord, he exhorted them to put away the strange gods, Baal and Ashteroth, and to serve the Lord only; promising, that if they would do so, they should be delivered from the Philistines: then ordering all Israel to meet him at Mizpeh, they humbled themselves there with prayer and fasting. The Philistines, having notice of this general meeting, approached them armed, and occasioned a terrible con-

\* *Levites.* Bethshemeth was a city which belonged to the Levites. See Josh. xxi. 16.

† *Contrary.* See Numb. iv. 40.

‡ *Seventy.* Bochart proves that the number mentioned, 1 Sam. vi. 19 should be translated *Seventy*.



sternation. The Israelites thus alarmed, begged of Samuel to intercede for them to the Lord. Samuel, thereupon, took a sucking lamb, and offered it whole for a burnt-offering, praying to the Lord for the people. His prayers were so effectual, that the Philistines coming to attack them at the same instant, the Lord sent down such a peal of thunder on them, just as they were ready to engage, that the Israelites obtained a mighty victory, and pursued them from Mizpeh beyond Beth-car. From which time the Philistines came not into the country of the Israelites, who recovered the towns those people had taken from them, from Ekron to Gath. And Samuel, in memory of this great deliverance, set up a monumental stone between Mizpeh and Shen, calling it Eben-Ezer, that is "The Stone of Help."

After this, Samuel, for the better administration of justice, took a circuit through Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, returning every year to Ramah: but growing in years, and unable to travel, he constituted his two sons, Joel and Abiah, Judges over Israel; who, degenerating from their pious father, were corrupted with bribes, and acted unjustly. In consequence of which, the Elders of Israel assembling, went in a body to Ramah, and complained to Samuel; saying, "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." The cause of their complaint was just; but in demanding a king, they forfeited the care of God, as well as the favour of Samuel. He, however, consulted the Lord; who ordered him to give them a king, as they desired, but reproached them for their ingratitude to himself and to Samuel; and to warn them of the dangerous consequences of rejecting him and his prophet, for the purpose of having a king, he gives him instructions to lay before them what they were to expect from this wanton and fickle temper; That their monarch should enslave them and their children, by making them subject to every menial office; that they should be always in arms and tumults; liable to the inconveniences of a constant war, and subjected to heavy taxes; and that

then they would cry to the Lord, but he would not hear them.

Notwithstanding this caution, which Samuel expressly delivered to the people, they persisted in their resolution, positively saying, "We will have a king over us, that we may be like other nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles." Samuel seeing them so positive, again consulted the Lord, who ordered him to comply with their desire, and make them a king. Upon this, Samuel dismissed the Elders of Israel to their cities; and since the setting up of a king at that time was but to gratify the humour of a fickle people, God accommodated them with a man extraordinary in his person, being taller by the head and shoulders than any of the people. This was Saul, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, a handsome youth. The asses of Kish, his father, having gone astray, he sent his son Saul with a servant to seek them; who after much wandering about, came to the town of Ramah-Zophim, Samuel's residence, without hearing any news of what they sought for. Here Saul's servant said to him, "There is a Seer (or Prophet) in this town who perhaps may tell us where the asses are." Saul approved what his servant proposed, and went into the town, enquiring for the Seer. God had, the day before, given Samuel notice of Saul's coming, and declared to him that he was the person whom he had chosen to be king. Saul meeting there with Samuel, who was going up to a high-place to offer sacrifice, asked him where was the house of the Seer? Samuel understanding that he was the person whom God had appointed to be king, answered, "I am the Seer; go up with me to this high-place: you shall dine with me to-day, and I will dismiss you to-morrow. As for the asses which were lost three days ago, be not concerned for them, they are found again." Then he assured him, that all the best things in Israel should be his: And bringing him home with him, he invited thirty persons to bear him company, seating Saul and his servant at his table, but placing Saul above all the other guests, and distinguishing him also by setting before him the best of the meat.

After they had eaten, Samuel, taking Saul to the top of the house, had further communication with him; and early in the morning calling him up, that he might dismiss him, they went out together; and as they were going down towards the end of the city, Samuel bid Saul order his servant to go before, but stand still himself for a while, that he might shew him what God had said concerning him. The servant being gone out of sight, Samuel, taking a vial of oil,\* poured it upon the head of Saul, and kissed† him; adding that he did this because the Lord had appointed him to be a prince over his inheritance. Then, as a token that what he had communicated was true, he foretold several particulars which should happen to him in his return; That near Rachel's tomb he would meet two men, who should inform him that his father's asses were found again; That departing thence, he should meet three men going to Bethel, one of them carrying three kids, the second three cakes of bread, and the third a bottle of wine, and that they should give him two parts thereof: and lastly, That when he came to the Mountain of God, where was a garrison of the Philistines, he should meet a company of prophets going into the city, where the Spirit of God should fall upon him, and he should prophesy among them. After this, he ordered Saul to go to Gilgal, where in seven days he might expect to see him, because there Samuel intended to offer a peace-offering. All which signs Saul found punctually fulfilled.

And now, though Samuel had thus privately anointed Saul, which was known only to themselves, yet, for the general satisfaction of the people, and that the choice and inauguration of the king might be more public and solemn, Samuel summoned them to appear before the Lord at Mizpeh; to which place the Ark of the Lord was brought,

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\* *Oil.* Saul was the first king of Israel that was anointed, though unction was in use before, as we may see in Judges ix. 8.

† *Kissed.* This signified a communication of grace and mutual concord between the regal and sacerdotal offices, a kiss being an emblem of friendship and peace.

that the choice might be openly made, and declared by casting lots among all the tribes of Israel, to know from which of them the king was to be chosen. The lot fell on the tribe of Benjamin; and casting the lot again among the families of Benjamin, the lot fell upon the family of Matri, and at last on Saul, the son of Kish. Saul being before assured that the choice would fall on him, was not present at the casting of the lot; but the people enquiring of the Lord whether they should fetch him or not, he not only consented, but expressly directed them where to find him. Accordingly they went for him; and having brought him, they set him among them, where he appeared taller than any of the people; from the shoulders upwards; which Samuel observing, said to them, "Behold him whom the Lord hath chosen; there is none like him among all the people!" At which words the people gave a general shout, saying, "God save the king." Then Samuel stated to them the duty of a king, and the manner of the kingdom, writing it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord. Which done, he dismissed the people, and Saul went home to Gibeah, attended with a particular company of men, whom God had inclined to wait on him.

But there were other persons\* who felt dissatisfied with the election; and though they concurred in the general wish of having a King, despised Saul in their hearts, and expressed their dislike by refusing to make such presents†

\* *Other persons.* These are called sons of Belial, 1 Sam. x. 27, that is, men of a rebellious, proud, disobedient spirit: who, though they had desired a king, yet now refused him; desiring what they had not, and despising what they had. They did not express their contempt of him by name, but did it worse, in a more general way, saying, v. 27, "Shall HE save us?"

† *Presents.* Presenting the king with gifts was one way of recognizing him. The Chaldee paraphrase says, "They came not to salute him," which is the same thing, for the first salutation offered to a king was always attended with presents, which presents carried with them a sign of peace and friendship, of congratulation and joy, and of subjection and obedience. It was a general custom, and still continues among the Eastern potentates, to bring presents: there being no approaching them without.



to him as others did on this occasion. This contemptuous conduct might naturally have excited his keen resentment, armed as he now was, with the supreme power; but Saul, with equal meekness and policy, passed by\* the offence, and “held his peace.”

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\* *Passed by.* The Hebrew says he was deaf, that is, seemed or pretended not to hear. In which he was very politic, being unwilling to begin his reign with any tumult, which his just resentment of such an affront might have occasioned. If he had taken any notice of the affront, and not revenged it, he had shewn himself mean-spirited, and if he had resented it, the people might have charged him with severity and cruelty.



# APPENDIX

TO THE FIRST VOLUME OF THE LONDON EDITION.

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HAVING proceeded thus far with the History, and concluded the First Volume, we shall take a retrospect of the events which it contains, and glance at the causes which produced them.

Of the formation of the world out of nothing, and the creation of a moral agent in the person of the first man, we have in the Scriptures the earliest and only rational account. Without the aid of divine revelation, we attempt with a trembling hand to lift the veil that hides the arcana of those primeval and momentous scenes. Nothing presents itself to the unassisted eye of human reason but

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“ A dark  
“ Illimitable ocean without bound,  
“ Without dimension ; where length, breadth and height,  
“ And time and place are lost.”

With this divine light, we have seen in the events narrated in the preceding volume, that man was actually created *in the image of God*. This strong expression has given rise to much conjecture, and to some argument ; but a small degree of attention to the fall of man, and his subsequent expulsion from Paradise, will place it in a clear and perspicuous light. For though it is certain, that man could not resemble God in his incommunicable attributes of self-existence, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, yet did he bear a resemblance to the divine nature in four different particulars, which though darkened and obscured, are still discernible amidst the gloom of sin, and the ruins of his apostasy and fall. First,

*naturally* as a spirit : for as the works of God become visible by the manifestation of his power, so is it with man, whose soul gives the impulse to the body, and is the sensitive and discerning faculty within him. Secondly, *intellectually* ; by the exercise of his memory, imagination, and judgment. The two first he holds in common with the superior animals ; the latter is his distinguishing characteristic from all other creatures, and connects him with futurity. Thirdly, Man was created *politically* in the image of the divine nature, by his power over all creatures, and his knowledge of their properties and dispositions. And, lastly, he was the *moral* image of God, by the possession of knowledge, love, and holiness ; in the exercise of which consisted his happiness, as well as in the freedom of his will, which led him only to do good, and to adore the Great Author of his being.

By his disobedience to the divine command, the first man, as we have already seen, brought death into the world. Adam, as the fœderal head of the human race, parted with happiness and Eden,

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'till one greater man  
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat.

Nor was this gracious design hid from our first parents, but made known to them in Paradise, as a cheering consolation amid the gloomy apprehensions which surrounded their minds, that in the day they sinned they should surely die. “ The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.”

Death had indeed already begun to reign in the soul of man. Instead of loving, he began to fear his offended Maker. “ I heard thy voice in the garden and was afraid.” The guilty passions began to exercise their tyranny upon the mind ; the disposition to do good was gone, and a will to do evil usurped its place. The divine image, like the Sun shorn of its beams, was darkened and eclipsed, and man could now say to corruption, “ Thou art my parent ; and to the worm, thou art my brother and my sister.”

Sin soon established its dominion in the world, and the first born of mankind stained his guilty hands with a brother's blood. The world was filled with violence, and all flesh had corrupted itself before God. Amidst this universal degeneracy, which none could have felt and deplored so strongly as Adam, God had still a Church of his own, and a people to himself, among whom he preserved a seed for future generations. By the righteousness of Enoch, who was not suffered to see death, and the faith of Noah, who with his family was saved in the Ark, God condemned the antediluvian world, and held out to all succeeding ages a fearful admonition in the destruction of all flesh by water.

Among the various revolutions which the globe we inhabit has undergone, none have left such numerous and unequivocal proofs, as the universal deluge. Infidelity argues in vain against positive evidence, for we have lived to see it demonstrated in the researches of modern science, that even the atmosphere which we breathe, contains, and is resolvable into a vast ocean of water, capable of burying the highest mountains beneath its waves, and of sinking the whole human race, with all the boasted monuments of art, once more in the gulph of ruin.

Noah was six hundred years old when the deluge took place; and Lamech his father had seen and conversed with the first man and his children; both Lamech and Methuselah could have informed Noah of the fall of man, and the promise of the Messiah; for Methuselah, Noah's grandfather, was three hundred and forty-three years old when Adam died, and he himself only died the year before the flood. Hence it is plain that the creation and fall were well known to Noah, and his sons, the latter being an hundred years old when they entered into the Ark. Noah was born only one hundred and twenty-six years after the death of Adam, and fourteen after the death of Seth the son of Adam, so that the great progenitor of the human race must have been seen and known by many thousands who were contemporaries both with Noah and his sons. Hence it is plain, that the creation, fall of man, and promise of a Messiah, were subjects with



which they, as well as all their immediate descendants, were well acquainted. If letters, and the art of writing were not known in those first ages of the world, the great longevity of the human race became subservient to the designs of Providence in treasuring up the knowledge of past events, and recording facts which would otherwise have been soon forgotten.

We have seen the world lost and restored, and man as from a new creation spring up from those in the Ark. But the imagination of his heart is still set in him to do evil. Sin exhibits fresh proofs of its extensive power and pernicious influence, even in the family of the second founder of the human race. The unnatural depravity of Ham excites anger in the Patriarch's breast, and the awful prediction, "a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren" seems fearfully verified in his posterity. Africa appears still to mourn the turpitude of Noah's youngest son, while ignorance and slavery are to this day the sad lot of his unhappy offspring.

Three great consequences arise out of the proneness to sin, so visible in the human heart immediately after the deluge. The establishment of idolatry; the foundation of absolute monarchy; and the dispersion of mankind by the confusion of tongues. Almost every vestige of the knowledge of God appears totally extinguished in the earth, when Abram is called out of Ur of the Chaldees, and his faith in the Divine promises rewarded by his seed becoming a blessing to all nations.

In the preceding volume we have also witnessed the severe trials of Jacob, and his pious resignation to the divine will, crowned with a peaceful termination; and his beloved Joseph, the object of peculiar care to that good providence which raised him from the furnace of affliction and the depths of a dungeon, to become a father to kings, and lord over all Egypt.

In Moses, the greatest of legislators, the best of historians, the most sublime of poets, we behold the meekest of men; the benevolent prophet, priest, and king of his afflicted people; the magnanimous leader, who suffers

adversity from choice ; and the zealous servant of the most high God.

The history of Job, one of the most sublime compositions (in the original) ever produced in any age or country, is purposely placed immediately after the events recorded in the Book of Genesis, as well from its strong claims to antiquity, as the numerous proofs it affords of having been written by the great Jewish lawgiver himself. It is the history of a real sufferer, delivered in the grandest style of Eastern poetry, and exhibits the most exalted pattern of virtue and integrity under every accumulated affliction. This great man, whose piety was still greater than his temporal grandeur, was the patron of the poor, a father to the fatherless, the scourge of injustice and oppression ; honoured and esteemed by the good, and dreaded by the vicious and profane. By the Divine permission, and the malice of the devil, he is at once reduced to the most indigent and deplorable circumstances, stripped of all his substance, bereaved of his children, and seized with a noisome and painful disease ; a spectacle of sorrow and wretchedness, of misery and horror, even to his dearest friends. But, sustained by the hand of the Almighty, and becoming resignation to the Divine will, he rises superior to all his afflictions, holds out the brightest example of true fortitude to the church of God in every succeeding age, has his family restored, his fortunes doubled, and ends a long life in the joyful assurance, that his Redeemer, in whom alone was all his hope, would raise him up at the last day. From this great example, we learn, that even the darkest dispensations of Providence are made subservient to the benefit of good men, and that the Lord will amply recompense all their sufferings in a future world. The doctrines of the resurrection, and the separate state of departed spirits, are clearly pointed out, while the sacrifice offered by Job for his three friends, plainly shews, it was well understood that by such means the way was open to the divine favour and acceptance.

In this, as well as in the whole of the writings of Moses, we perceive clear indications that the ancient Patriarchs

and Sages, in every age expected the Messiah (and hence may be distinctly traced their anxious desire for children) many of whom were fully satisfied of the insufficiency of the first covenant to take away sin. For though it is observed upon the solemn occasion of Noah's sacrifice immediately after the deluge, the Lord said, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake," yet it is plain from St. Paul, as well as from David, that it was faith alone in the promised Redeemer, which rendered the sacrifice acceptable to God.

Pharaoh, the proud tyrant and blasphemous oppressor of Israel, unhumbled by ten plagues, the loss of his first-born, and the desolation of his country, pursues his rescued captives, and sinks deservedly under the hand of Omnipotence beneath the waves of the Red Sea.

In the subsequent conduct of the Israelites we see an exact portrait of the human heart: prone to rebellion, fond of every idol set up by the vain imagination, forgetful of recent mercies, and slavishly devoted to the good things of the present life. Their travels in the Wilderness, are a lively emblem of the Christian's course toward the heavenly Canaan through the wilderness of this world, and too often both are seen unmindful of the hand that gives them angels' food, and rains down bread from heaven. The solemn institution of the passover, the sprinkling of blood, and the daily sacrifice, point out the coming of that one, great, full and perfect oblation, which was to be offered for the sins of the whole world.

War, now become through the prevalence of sin, a profession, approaches the nations of Canaan. Sunk in the deepest idolatry, the grossest superstitions, and a corruption of manners scarcely to be conceived, we see the Canaanites fall before the stroke of Israel; and they imbibing the profligacy of the conquered, for which, deserted of God, their heads were often made to bow low in battle, and sink before the spear of despicable foes.

The book of Joshua serves as a foundation for the history of the Jews for four hundred and thirty years, when the common wealth under Judges was changed into a monarchy almost absolute.

The book of Judges, as we have seen, has an essential connexion, both with the books of Moses, and that of Joshua. The sufferings and captivities of Israel, were a natural consequence of their idolatries and corruptions. Nor is the sacred history of those remote ages left unsupported by the evidence of Pagan writers. Their testimony is sufficiently ample to confound the unblushing assertions of the boasted friends of infidelity in this *age of reason*. The fall and deluge are recognized among all the ancient nations. The memory of Joshua and his conquests, was preserved among the heathen; and there are ancient monuments still extant, which prove that the Carthaginians were a colony of the Tyrians who escaped from him. The storm of hail recorded in the eleventh chapter of Joshua, was transformed by the poets into a tempest of stones, with which, as they say, Jupiter assailed the enemies of Hercules in Arim, which is exactly the country where Joshua fought with the children of Anak. The actions of Gideon are preserved by Sanchoniathon, a Tyrian writer, who lived soon after him, and whose antiquity is attested by Porphyry, one of the most violent enemies of Christianity. We shall add but one more, out of many that may be adduced in corroboration of the great events of these early ages, recorded in Jewish history.

\* The great General of the Israelites says before his army, "SOLAR LIGHT *stay upon Gibeon; and LUNAR LIGHT in the valley of Ajalon.*" The inaccuracy of our translation makes it, "Sun and moon stand still." It is evident from the original that Joshua neither meant nor addressed the bodies of the sun and moon, and yet Infidelity affects a foolish triumph, as if all the planetary system must have been thrown into confusion had such an event taken place as the cessation of motion in the earth and moon, whereas nothing can be more evident from the original, than that he addressed the *Solar light* and *Lunar light*, to remain above the horizon, until Israel was avenged of its enemies.

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\* See Pike's *Philosophia Sacra*, p. 44. and the late learned and Rev. Julius Bate, on Joshua, *cb. x. v. 12, 13.*



The History of China contains a tradition, that in the sixty-seventh year of the reign of their eighth Emperor YAU, about five hundred and forty-seven years after the decease of FOHI the first Emperor, and one thousand four hundred and fifty-one years before our Saviour's incarnation (corresponding with the miracle recorded in Joshua) the sun did not set for a considerable time. They add, that it was declining toward the west when the light of it was suspended in the heavens. China being so far to the Eastward of Palestine, the sun would set five hours earlier at Pekin, the capital of China, than at Jerusalem, which makes the evidence from the Chinese account still stronger. The difference of longitude in time is 5h. 1' 36'. or 81° 36' in distance. The Hebrew text says, "The Solar light stayed in the DIVISION of the heavens (the horizon) and hastened not to go off ABOUT a whole day." The corrected Chinese account makes it stationary about ten hours, arising probably from their not having noticed the beginning of this extraordinary phænomenon. We also learn from Herodotus (Lib. 2. Chap. 142.) that the Egyptians and their priests gave that historian some account of this miracle.

In the fall of Samson, we see the natural consequence of fatal passions, attaching the wise and good to women destitute of virtue, and at last becoming the victims of sensuality. Instead of remaining the judge and avenger of his injured people, he sacrifices his duty to God and his country to a treacherous Deililah, who sells him into his enemies' hands, where, deserted of his almighty Defender, his lamentable death leaves us an awful and instructive lesson, that God is not to be deserted with impunity, and that no departure from the paths of rectitude can escape the eye of Him that seeth all things.

The History of Ruth displays a specimen of Patriarchal simplicity, as well in language as manners, hardly any where else to be paralleled in ancient history. The heroine of the piece deserves the highest praise. Like the great Lawgiver, she prefers affliction with the people of God to all the enjoyments of worldly wealth; and adopts the wise resolution that the God of Israel shall be her only

portion. And how is she rewarded? The Moabitish damsel, the poor but faithful attendant of the forlorn Naomi, becomes the mother in Israel of a long and illustrious race of kings, and the distinguished ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ.

While Israel is bowing its neck to the yoke of bondage before the nations of Canaan, and the Philistines, possessed of the coasts, are laying the foundation of their commercial grandeur, God is raising up, in his faithful servant SAMUEL, a defender of his people, and the preserver of his worship. Eli's age and infirmities, but above all, the criminality of his sons, and the unpopularity of his family, rendered it highly expedient that some one should take the lead in the government, in whom the people should place an entire confidence. Such was Samuel, whose courage and integrity could only be exceeded by his zeal for the honour of God, and an anxious desire to free his people from corrupt manners and servile bondage. He is particularly distinguished as the great founder of the Schools of the Prophets, which subsisted under various revolutions and persecutions to the time of the Babylonish Captivity. They were seminaries for the instruction of youth in the law; in the duties of religion; the exercises of piety, and the praises of God.\* Samuel was the first head or governor of these schools, and many of the greatest characters in the following ages were his successors, among whom we shall have occasion to notice particularly Elijah and Elisha. As an historian, the books of Ruth, Judges, and twenty-four first chapters of the first Book which bears the Prophet's name, appear to be his composition, and are distinguishable among the books of Scripture for perspicuity in the narrative and conciseness of style. This truly great and good man, in the whole tenor of his life and conduct, seems uniformly to have aimed at no other object, than the promotion of religion and literature, and the glory of God.

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\* See 1 Sam. x. 5. 1 Chron. xxy. 1, 2.

His efforts appear to have been attended with considerable success, and retarded the progress of idolatry, or perhaps its introduction among the Jews; for a considerable time. With respect to the surrounding nations, they seem to have lost all ideas of the great Jehovah, were enslaved to the most contemptible superstitions, as well as corruption of manners, and were fast ripening for that destruction, which in the succeeding volume we shall see rapidly overwhelming them.

In the early ages of the world, and for some years subsequent to the deluge, the patriarchal government, in which every parent was the king, priest, and prophet of his own family, appears to have subsisted universally, till Nimrod, 114 years after the flood, built Nineveh, assumed kingly powers, and laid the foundation of the Assyrian or Babylonian Empire. This empire continued to grow in strength and extent, till its dominion reached from the river Indus to the Mediterranean Sea; and is aptly described by the prophet Daniel, as a tree whose boughs reached to heaven, and under whose branches all the feathered tribes might repose. In the just retributions of Providence, the Assyrian kings became scourges to the idolatrous nations of the East; and, among others, to the kingdom and people of Judea. Edom had changed its Aristocratic dukes, recorded in the Book of Genesis, for a king; and Moab had followed the example, as we shall soon have occasion to see, when her monarch imbrues his hands in the blood of his own son, whom he offered as a sacrifice to avert a threatened calamity; and the Philistines had adopted a monarchical government instead of that under their five lords, so often mentioned in the Books of Judges and Samuel. The Carthaginians had extended, by means of colonies and commerce, the bloody and abhorred rites of an abominable superstition over all the coasts of the Mediterranean; and the shores of Britain were polluted, under the influence of the Druids, with human sacrifices!

Egypt was besotted with the most contemptible superstitions, and adored numberless gods in the form of every brute animal. Their Apis, under the semblance of a calf,

becomes, at no distant period, the ensnaring sin of Israel, and that unhappy nation is punished with a destruction from the Almighty, as just as it is terrible. Syria, another of the scourges of Israel, under its restless and enterprising monarchs, sinks beneath the arm of the Assyrian kings. Her boasted divinities lose a leper,\* but gain a king in Ahaz;† and we see in this degrading act a signal and lamentable instance of human folly and base ingratitude to the insulted God of Israel.

We cannot but remark that all the great empires of antiquity noticed in Scripture were infected with idolatry; that they have all perished from off the earth, and have now no other existence than as a tale that is told in the faithful and instructive page of history. God punishes nations in the present life, and individuals in the next: and hence history becomes a faithful mirror to mankind, and the most useful philosophy, that of teaching by example. In the greatest solemnities and most sacred and revered mysteries of the Pagan religion, far from perceiving any thing to recommend virtue, piety, or the practice of the most essential duties of ordinary life, we find the authority of laws, the imperious power of custom, the presence of magistrates, the assembly of all orders of the state, the example of fathers and mothers, all conspiring to train up a whole nation from their infancy, in an impure and sacrilegious worship, under the sacred name of religion. Shall we wonder, after viewing this just picture of human depravity, that the four great empires of the world have been razed by the stroke of Omnipotence from their foundations—that the Egyptians, Carthaginians, and the nations of Canaan have disappeared—or that the Jewish monarchy, its sacred worship, and once-revered and far-famed temple, all lie buried under their own ruins?

Amidst this universal degeneracy and corruption, the people of Israel suddenly demand of Samuel to make them a king. Hitherto God had been their sovereign. Under

\* 2 Kings v. 18.

† 2 Chron. xxviii. 23.



his banners they had often marched to victory ; but, infected with the example of other nations, they despised the remonstrances of the prophet ; and the king whom they anointed to reign over them seems equally to have slighted the law of God, the wise instructions of Samuel, and the rights of his people. In all these important events, we behold much for instruction, correction, and reproof. Happy those who learn wisdom from hence, and are followers of them, who, through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises.



A

COMPLETE

# H I S T O R Y

OF THE

*Holy Bible.*

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*BOOK THE FIFTH.*

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**T**HE first memorable exploit of Saul, the new monarch of Israel, was against Nahash, king of the Ammonites, in consequence of an application for aid from the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, to whom Nahash had refused to grant reasonable conditions. Saul dispatched his messengers throughout Israel, commanding all, on pain of death, to come to the relief of Jabesh. The Israelites readily obeyed, and in a very short time an army of three hundred thousand Israelites, besides thirty thousand of the tribe of Judah, was collected. This army Saul divided into three parts, and by break of day surprised the careless Ammonites. The action continued till noon; the victorious Israelites bearing down all before them. This glorious success, heightened much by the greatness of the deliverance from so insulting an enemy, afforded no small satisfaction and encouragement to Saul and his friends, some of whom, calling to mind the reflections thrown upon Saul at his election, demanded to have his opposers brought to condign punishment: but the king, with equal generosity and policy, replied, that he would not suffer that day of general joy to be clouded with the death of a single Israelite.

Upon this signal victory, Samuel, earnestly desirous of reconciling all parties, and of giving an opportunity to those who had opposed Saul, now to recognize him, proposed a general meeting at Gilgal, to confirm his election, which they accordingly did, in the most unanimous manner; and having sacrificed peace-offerings to the Lord, both the king and people celebrated their meeting with much joy. But lest any intemperance in their mirth should make them forget God, Samuel took occasion there to remind them of their former transgressions, in slighting his administration, and changing the government; challenging them to convict him, if they could, of any injury he had done them. Of which they unanimously acquit him. Then, repeating the many deliverances which God had given to their forefathers and themselves, and setting before them their last transgression in rejecting the government of God, and desiring a king, he assures them, that notwithstanding all this, if they would serve and obey the Lord, both they and their king should continue under the care and protection of God; but if they would not, that then the hand of the Lord should fall in judgment upon them and their princes. And to convince them that he uttered not this of himself, nor from any prejudice against them, but merely by the Divine suggestion, he assured them that the Lord himself would confirm what he had said by a great storm of thunder and rain. Accordingly, upon Samuel's praying, there fell such a storm of thunder and rain, as affrighted the Israelites into a sense of their former transgression; and made them intreat Samuel to pray to God for them, acknowledging that they had sinned in desiring a king. Samuel continued his exhortation, advising the people to serve God, assuring them that he would not only pray for them, but that he would always be ready to teach them their duty; at the same time threatening them with destruction if they disobeyed, both them and their king.

After the victory obtained by Saul over the Ammonites, he dismissed his large army, retaining only three thousand men; two thousand of whom he kept with him at Michmash and on the mountains of Bethel, while the other

thousand was placed under the command of his son Jonathan at Gibeah. Jonathan being a brave young prince, and ambitious of renown, cut off the garrison of the Philistines at Geba, which was a sort of signal to both sides to prepare for war. The Philistines soon received notice of this ; and in order to revenge it, raised a vast army ; which, beside a great number of foot, consisted of three\* thousand chariots, and six thousand horse, with which they came and encamped at Michmash. Saul, by sound of trumpet, collected what force he could raise to oppose them, and ordered the rendezvous to be at Gilgal ; where he encamped, daily expecting the arrival of Samuel. Disappointed, however, in this, the people were utterly discouraged, and generally deserted their new and much-desired king, every one shifting for himself, some hiding themselves in the rocks, and others, not thinking themselves safe, passing the river Jordan.

Saul, finding himself thus forsaken, and despairing of Samuel's coming, called for a burnt-offering and a peace-offering, and offered the burnt-offering : Which he had no sooner done, than the approach of the prophet was announced ; upon which he went out to meet him. Samuel asking him what he had done, Saul told him all, adding, as an apology for his conduct, That seeing the people deserted him for want of his presence, and the near approach of the enemy, he was afraid they would attack him before he could address himself to the Lord for success, and therefore he had offered a burnt-offering

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\* *Three*. This is, by the neglect of transcribers, rendered thirty thousand. But it is not likely that the Philistines had thirty thousand chariots of war, since Shishack, the most powerful of all the kings of Egypt, had but twelve hundred, 2 Chron. xii. 3, and since Pharaoh had but six hundred, and all the other princes, whose equipage is related in Scripture, fewer still, as may be seen in many places. For which reasons the Syriac and Arabic versions have given the Philistines but three thousand chariots. To these considerations we may add, that the cavalry was always more numerous than the chariots of war, and yet they had no more than six thousand horsemen.



before he came. Samuel sharply reprov'd him, and charg'd him with a breach\* of God's commandment, by which he had forfeited his kingdom, and which God had now transferred to another. Upon this, Samuel left Gilgal, and went to Gibeah, whither Saul and Jonathan, with about six hundred men, and those very ill provided, followed. For the Philistines, to prevent the Israelites from arming, had taken care that they should have no smith; so that they were forced to make use of their working tools, such as plough-shares, mattocks, axes, and coulter, instead of military weapons.

While this little army lay at Gibeah, the vanguard of the Philistines, in three bodies, sallied out to ravage the country; but their main body continued in the straits of Micmash. Jonathan observing their position, and inspired with a more than ordinary courage, privately withdrew from the camp, attended only by his armour-bearer, to whom he had imparted his design, and who promised to stand by him. Being come near the out-guards, the Philistines discovering them, took them to be some of the Israelites who had skulked about the rocks, and in ridicule called them to come near. The way by which they were to pass was steep and narrow, having a sharp rock on each side, so that Jonathan and his servant were obliged to climb up on their hands and feet. As soon however as they reached the summit, they laid about them so furiously, that, in a short space of time, they slew twenty Philistines. This bold attempt of two men only, on a whole army, occasioned a general panic, the natural effect of which was so great a disorder, that

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\* *Breach.* What that breach was is hard to guess; for according to the text it is plain, 1 Sam. xiii. 8, that Saul tarried seven days for Samuel, but he came not. Though his impatience might shorten the last day, and that Samuel deferred his coming to the last, to try Saul's obedience. Some will have it that Saul himself offered the burnt-offering, which can hardly be supposed; for the Ark of the Lord being with them, they could not want a priest to do that office. But whatever the cause was, Saul was guilty of that which cost him his kingdom, almost in the beginning of his reign.

while they sought, every man to save his own life, they fell on each other's swords. Saul, being informed of this disorder by his centinels, mustered his army in haste, in order to find out the cause of it; upon which Jonathan and his armour-bearer were the only persons missing. The soldiers then prepared for action, and the deserters themselves flocked to his standard; the whole body, taking advantage of the confusion of the Philistines, armed themselves with their enemies' weapons, and fell upon them with such desperate fury, that they soon became masters of the field.

Saul had taken an inauspicious step in the commencement of his reign, and unhappily was guilty of another in this action: for before he engaged, to secure the victory as he hoped, by keeping his men from falling too soon on the spoil, he made proclamation in the camp, that every man should be cursed who should eat before night. Herein he followed too much the dictates of his own will, without consulting God, as he did a little before the action, when calling for the Ark, and the priest, to enquire of God what to do, in a preposterous haste, fearing to lose time, he stopped the priest, bidding him withdraw his hand, that he might not lose the opportunity of falling on the Philistines in their confusion. By this unhappy conduct, Saul defeated his own purpose; for the people for want of sustenance, especially those who had hidden themselves, were so feeble, that they were not able to pursue the enemy; in consequence of which many escaped, who must otherwise have fallen into their hands. Jonathan, having left the camp before this proclamation was given, knew nothing of it; and, passing through a wood where honey dropped as he marched, he took some of it and ate, offering some to the people who had joined him; but they refused, telling him that his father had charged them with an oath not to eat. Jonathan was concerned at his father's oversight, for he knew that the glory of the day would thereby be diminished. However, he excused himself for eating on account of his faintness; but the people, who were almost famished,

could not refrain from imitating him; and falling on the plunder, they also began to eat.

Saul again rashly proposed to pursue the Philistines by night; but the priest opposed him, advising him to consult the Lord: which he did; but received no answer. Saul was uneasy at this; and imputing this repulse to a breach of his orders concerning not eating, he resolved to find out the offender by casting the lot, which fell upon Jonathan, whom Saul would certainly have put to death, if the people had not interposed, and pleaded the merit of the prince, to whom the honour of that day was wholly owing. Jonathan being thus rescued from death, Saul gave over all thoughts of pursuing the Philistines, who by that means escaped to their own country.

Notwithstanding these miscarriages of Saul, he still continued\* in the government of Israel as king; nor was he so much out of favour, but that the Lord would employ him again in another expedition, that he might have an opportunity to recover himself, and make some amends for his former mistakes. In a short time, Samuel came to him again with a message from the Lord, which was this: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel; how he laid wait for him in the way when he came out of Egypt.† Now go,

\* *Continued.* See 1 Sam. xiv. 47, where it is said that "Saul took the kingdom over Israel." From which words some think, that the two years wherein he is said to have reigned, *cb.* xiii. 1, was all the time that he reigned lawfully, and after that, declining from that manner of ruling, which from the Lord, Samuel had prescribed and recorded in a book, *cb.* x. v. 25, he governed arbitrarily by a standing force. And it may not be unlikely that he, who was a jealous prince, and always regardful of his own safety, observing how dear his son was to the people, might not think himself altogether out of danger of being dethroned, and therefore took what measures he thought best to secure the kingdom to himself; and being a military prince, he might probably think a standing force the most secure. And indeed, he wanted not occasions for raising one, and keeping it up; for he had wars on all hands, being frequently attacked by the neighbouring princes all his reign.

† *Egypt.* This may seem a severe piece of justice, considering that it was executed upon a whole nation for a fact committed above four hundred years



“and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have. Spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox, sheep, camel, and ass.” This command was so express and plain, that it was scarcely possible to mistake it; and Saul, without hesitation, prepares to execute it. But before he committed any act of hostility, he advised the Kenites, who had been kind to the Israelites upon their leaving Egypt, to depart, lest they should share in the fate of the Amalekites, with whom they lived in common. The Kenites took his advice, and marched off; and Saul then fell upon the Amalekites. But he forgot, or designedly broke his orders; for he not only saved the king of the Amalekites, but spared the best of the cattle, and every thing that was valuable. Of this Samuel had notice from the Lord, who so highly resented this inexcusable disobedience of Saul, that, expressing himself after the manner of men, he said to Samuel, “It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned from me, and hath not performed my commandments.” This so grieved Samuel, that he cried all night, in Saul’s behalf, to the Lord: and rising early the next morning to meet Saul, he found him at Gilgal. At their first interview, Saul saluted Samuel very cheerfully, informing him that he had performed the commandment of God. “What then, said Samuel, is the meaning of the beating of the sheep, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” Saul told him they were saved to be offered in sacrifice to the Lord. Then, said Samuel, “Hear what the Lord hath said to me this night: When thou wast mean in thine own sight, did I not make thee the head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint thee king over Israel, and command thee to destroy the Amalekites? Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord?” Saul justified himself, and said that he had done so; but that it was the people who

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before, and for which too the aggressors were then punished in their own persons, *Exod. xvii. 13.* But this shews God’s faithfulness and love to his people; and that, first or last, he will revenge their cause.



had reserved the best of the spoil for sacrifice. To this Samuel replied, "Obedience is better than sacrifice; but rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as iniquity and idolatry. Now therefore hear thy doom, O Saul! Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath rejected thee from being king." These words roused Saul, who immediately acknowledged his sin, and intreated Samuel to pray for him, and accompany him to worship the Lord; but Samuel refusing, and offering to be gone, Saul caught hold of the skirt of his mantle and it rent; whereupon Samuel told him prophetically, That God had rent the kingdom from him, and had given it to another more worthy of it than himself.

The loss of the kingdom made the deepest impression upon Saul; and apprehending, that if Samuel should refuse to go with him to worship the Lord, it would lessen him in the esteem of the people; he again acknowledged his fault, and entreated Samuel to honour him now before the people, and turn again with him, that he might worship the Lord his God.

Samuel complied with his pressing request; and Saul having performed his devotions, Samuel asked for the king of the Amalekites, who being brought before him, expected mercy from the reverend prophet; but, without any ceremony, he fell upon him, and hewed him in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal, saying, "As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women." Upon this Samuel went to his own house at Ramah, and Saul to his palace at Gibeah; after which Samuel never\* more saw Saul, yet could not forbear to mourn for him.

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\* *Never* The transpositions of words and phrases render the translations obscure in many places. Thus it is in 1 Sam. xv. 35, where the word *until* is placed so as to make one imagine that Samuel saw Saul at the day of his death: But on the contrary, as St. Jerome observes on another text, Matt. i. 25, the word *until* implies not that he saw Saul at, or after his death, but that Samuel never afterwards saw Saul.

God, having already made it known to Samuel that he had fixed upon another to rule in Israel instead of Saul, ordered him to prepare to go to Bethlehem, under colour of sacrificing there; to invite Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice-feast, and to do as he should there direct him. Samuel obeyed, and approaching Bethlehem, the elders of the city were surprised,\* and going out to meet him, enquired if he came peaceably? He replied, Yes, and added, that he came to hold a feast† unto the Lord. He therefore bade them prepare themselves, and come with him to the feast: but in a more peculiar manner he addressed himself to Jesse and his sons, whom he sanctified and invited to the feast. After this, going to Jesse's house, and observing his seven sons, he concluded that Eliab, the eldest, who was a tall and comely man, was the person whom God had pitched upon to succeed Saul. But God soon corrected his judgment; and having surveyed the seven, he asked their father, if he had not more children? He told him that he had one son more, who was in the field watching the sheep. Samuel bid him send for him, for he would not sit down to eat till he came. When he came, Samuel viewed him with pleasure and admiration, for he was very beautiful; and at the same time the Lord instructed him to anoint him, for this was he. Then Samuel, pouring oil on the head of David, anointed‡ him in the midst of his brethren. And from that day the Spirit§ of the Lord was upon David; but He

\* *Surprised.* The cause of their surprise, was to see him unattended, fearing that he came to denounce some terrible judgment against them, which was the cause of their demanding whether he came in peace or not?

† *Feast, or Sacrifice.* Sacrifice, in a strict and proper sense, as a burnt-offering for sin, might not be offered by the law in any other place than before the ark; but peace-offerings or feasts might.

‡ *Anointed.* David was three times anointed. First, privately, as at this time, not that he should immediately reign, but succeed Saul at his death. Secondly, he was anointed publicly when he was made king of the tribe of Judah. Thirdly, When he was made king of all the tribes of Israel.

§ *Spirit.* The Spirit here mentioned has many epithets bestowed on him by interpreters, who call him the Spirit of Fortitude both of mind and body, which

departed from Saul, and an evil spirit\* possessed him, which soon appeared in the sad perturbations, wherewith his distempered mind was frequently agitated; which his servants observing, they advised him to divert his melancholy with music, which would settle and quiet his disturbed spirits. Saul, desirous of ease from these inquietudes, consented; upon which one of them recommended David to him, telling him he was not only an excellent musician, but a brave† and prudent man, and a very comely person; adding that the Lord was with him. This character of David pleased Saul, who sent messengers to David's father, to desire him to send his son to him. Jesse, knowing the custom of the court, to recommend his son the better, sent a handsome present with him to the king, who, at first sight, was pleased with David; but when he exercised his skill upon the harp,

enabled David to perform those heroic and warlike exploits, which to his bare natural strength had been insuperable; for it was after his anointing that he slew the lion and the bear, and the giant Goliah. He is by others called a Royal and Majestic Spirit: for as God, calling Saul from keeping asses to a kingdom, changed his rustic temper into a noble and magnanimous spirit; so he transferred the same spirit from Saul to David, that he who before had employed his thoughts only about the care of his sheep, should now devote them to the more useful government of Israel.

\* *Evil spirit.* Josephus, and many later authors, are of opinion, that this evil spirit was a deep melancholy which Saul had contracted upon his being rejected by God, and deprived by Samuel; representing to his distempered mind the sad passions of Jealousy, Envy, Grief, Despair, Anger, and other anxieties, which are often dissipated and appeased by music; as is plain from David's being recommended to Saul to divert and quiet him, when he was at any time agitated by any of these perturbations.

† *Brave.* 1 Sam. xvi. 18, David's character is set out at large for his courage and knowledge of war; and of God's being with him, as it is afterwards, when he became eminent in the world for those excellencies; from whence some note that David had slain Goliah before this recommendation; but they ought to have considered that what is here spoken, being written afterwards, was spoken prophetically, as the words plainly denote; for David, though anointed by Samuel before this, returned to his usual employment of looking after sheep, as appears from v. 19.



Saul was so delighted with his performance, that he repeated his request to Jesse to permit him to continue with him; to which the old man readily consented: and Saul, experiencing advantage from the musical powers of David, in order to attach him to his service, promoted him to the office of his armour-bearer.

In this short interval of peace, David often exercised his talent on the harp, to the great satisfaction of Saul, who enjoyed serenity of mind only when David thus diverted him. And now, the Philistines having rallied their scattered troops, and recruited their forces, appeared again with a great army to revenge their former dishonour and losses; and marching to Shochoh, which belonged to Judah, they encamped between Shochoh and Azekah, in the borders of Damuim. Saul prepared to meet them; and accordingly marched his army to the hill above the Valley of Elah, which separated the two camps. While the two armies were in sight of each other, a champion, of prodigious stature, came forth from the Philistine camp, and challenged any Israelite to single combat, on the decision of which, the fate of either army should depend. He was of a gigantic size, being nearly ten feet high, and his arms and armour were proportioned to his vast bulk and strength. The appearance of this monstrous champion was so terrible to the Israelites, that none durst accept the challenge which this presumptuous infidel for forty days successively had insolently offered. At last, the God of Israel furnishes Saul with a champion of his own, in the person of David, whom\* we suppose to have been dismissed from the service of Saul, for the present, upon his going into the field to command the army, if

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\* *Whom.* Saul having found relief from his melancholy indisposition by David's playing on the harp, and the war coming on again, Saul's mind was probably employed by his military preparations, which might divert his melancholy; it is probable he might for a season dismiss David, who went home to his father's house and followed his old employment; during which time he often went between the camp and his own house, to enquire after the health of his brethren who were in the army, and to furnish them with necessaries; for in those early days of the Is-



not before. However, at this time, the three eldest sons of Jesse served in the army under Saul, and David going frequently to visit his brethren, and carry them provisions, God so ordered it, that on the last of those forty days, during which the Philistine champion, Goliath, used to challenge Israel, David came to the camp just before the armies were going to engage, and, leaving the provisions with those who guarded the carriages, he ran into the army to salute his brethren: while he was talking with them, Goliath came out of the Philistines' army as usual, and in David's hearing, bid defiance. The Israelites were still terrified at the sight of him; but to encourage some hero to accept the challenge, the royal proclamation was repeated, which stated that, "Whoever would accept the challenge, and slay the gigantic enemy, should be nobly rewarded; and that the king would give him his daughter in marriage, and make his father's house free\* in Israel." This being repeated to him again, his eldest brother, Eliab, hearing his reply to it, took an occasion from thence to quarrel† with him; which David, to avoid, turned from him, and talked with another man, expressing a more than ordinary zeal and courage for the cause of the God of Israel, and a high contempt of the insolent Goliath: insomuch, that David's words at last reached the ear of Saul, who immediately sent for him; when, being introduced to the king, he, with perfect composure, said, "Let no man fear this Philistine, for I, thy servant, will fight him." Saul, surveying David's youth, with concern told him he was too young to engage with such a veteran as Goliath. To this David answered, that he had performed as great things as the killing of the gigantic champion could be; that he had slain a lion

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raelitish kingdom, it may reasonably be supposed, that those who served in the army, served at their own proper expence, and not at the king's; which appears pretty plain by the provisions which Jesse sent by David to his sons in the army.

\* *Free.* That is, would make him noble, and exempt him from all tributary payments and taxes.

† *Quarrel.* It is likely Eliab bore David less good will since the time that Samuel had anointed him, by which he thought himself slighted, his youngest brother being preferred before him.

and a bear with his own hand ; and did not question but the same Providence that had delivered him from them, would now save him from the hand of the Giant.

Saul, perceiving David's fixed resolution, orders him to be clad in his own armour ; but not having been used to such accoutrements, he declines them altogether, and desires to chuse his own arms. Then taking nothing but his staff and sling, with five smooth stones, he marched to meet his adversary, who, seeing a youth with so effeminate a countenance, and considering it as done in contempt of him, he could not forbear cursing ; and moving towards him to dispatch him in his rage, David instantly proceeded to meet him, and fitting a stone to his sling,\* he threw it with such violence, that, God directing it, it struck him on the forehead, and sunk into it ; upon which Goliath fell flat on his face. David immediately ran to him, and drawing the Philistine's own sword, cut off his head with it. The Philistines, seeing their champion slain, immediately fled in great disorder ; but the Israelites standing ready in arms, seeing the success of their young champion, and the flight of the enemy, giving a great shout, pursued the Philistines through the valley of Ekron, and made a great slaughter among them. After which, returning from the pursuit, they plundered the Philistine camp, and after enriching themselves with the spoil of their tents and other goods, they returned to their own camp.

The field being cleared, David, among the rest, returns from the slaughter of the enemy, and is met by Abner the general, who conducts him to Saul, David carrying Goliath's head in his hand. Saul enquires who† this

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\* The Israelites were famous for slinging stones in war, long before this. See Judges xx. 16. And what had probably been David's amusement while feeding his father's sheep, now became in the hands of Omnipotence an instrument of Israel's deliverance.

† *Who*. Commentators differ much about the time when this combat between David and Goliath was fought. For since we read in 1 Samuel xvi. 19, before this account of the Philistine's defiance, that Saul sent for David and that David came to him, played on his harp before him, grew into favour with him, and

young hero is ; David tells him, he was son to Jesse the Bethlehemite. There was no applause wanting to set off this glorious action of David, but none expressed so much satisfaction as Jonathan, who, being himself a prince of great bravery, was so enraptured with David's courage and conduct in this enterprize, that he contracted a firm friendship with him ; and having made a mutual covenant of amity, the prince gave David his robe, his sword, belt, and bow. After this, Saul takes

was made his armour-bearer, *ver.* 21, 22, it is strange that neither Saul nor Abner should remember or know him, when he came to offer himself to the combat. This has made some think, that this combat was fought before the time that David was sent to play before Saul. To which the character given of David by Saul's servants, when they recommended him, not only as a skilful musician, but a mighty valiant man, a man of war, and that the Lord was with him, *ver.* 28. seems to give some countenance. But on the other hand, as it cannot be supposed that this encounter with Goliath happened before David had been anointed by Samuel ; so, since the Spirit of the Lord, upon that anointing of David, came immediately upon him, from that day forward, *ver.* 13, it is reasonable to conclude, that from that very time the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul ; and the evil spirit disturbed him : and that very soon after, Saul's servants perceiving him to be troubled, recommended David to him ; and that upon David's playing, the evil spirit had left Saul, and he was become well, *ver.* 23, before this invasion of the Philistines. And though the character Saul's servants gave of David's valour may very reasonable be supposed to have been spoken prophetically, yet it may likewise well enough arise from his bold and brave undertaking, in encountering the lion and the bear in defence of his flock ; which though Saul had not, yet some of his servants might have heard of, and from thence infer the Lord was with him. Besides, we read that David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem, *cb.* xvii. 15. And since we never read of his going to Saul but upon that occasion of the evil spirit that troubled him, and at this time, when he went to fight the Philistines, it is most likely his going to Saul there mentioned, *ver.* 15, was when Saul was so troubled ; and his returning from Saul to his sheep again was after the spirit had left Saul. For after David had slain Goliath, it is said Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house, but set him over the men of war, *cb.* xviii. 2, and 5. So that if this duel had been before his playing to Saul there had been no occasion to have sent for David to play before him, because he must be supposed to have been with him.



particular notice of David; and in recompence of his service gives him the command over his men of war: in which post he behaved himself with so much prudence, that he acquired the general applause.

David's virtues commanding respect from all men, excited a jealousy in Saul, which disturbed the quiet of his life, and was soon aggravated by an unhappy circumstance; for when David returned with Saul from the victory over the Philistines, among the crowds of people that graced the triumph, were certain women playing upon musical instruments and singing, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." This gave Saul an unlucky hint of David's succeeding him; for besides the distinction made in favour of David by this acclamation, he suggested to himself that David affected the kingdom.

From this time, Saul resolved to take him off, which he first attempted with his own hand, on the very next day, in the following manner. Saul's melancholy returning, David attended as usual, and touched his harp before him; and while he was thus engaged, not in the least suspecting any danger, Saul darted his javelin at him, but happily it missed him; upon which David withdrew. After this, David was removed from his attendance on Saul's person, and degraded from his general command over the army, to that of a thousand men only: in which he behaved with such modesty and prudence, that he was caressed by all the people, which still inflamed the jealousy of Saul, and put him upon inventing means to rid himself of him.

According to Saul's declaration before the battle, David might have claimed one of his daughters, as part of the promised reward; but David was so well contented with the honours already bestowed on him, that he never claimed this part due to his services; nor had Saul any regard to the performance of his promise, till his jealousy suggested to him that it might be rendered an effectual means of David's destruction. Therefore calling for him, he told him he intended to bestow his eldest daughter on him; but engaged him to continue in his service, which



he knew would expose him to continual danger. David modestly excused himself, representing the meanness of his family; which Saul immediately lays hold of, and disposes of this daughter to Adriel, the son of Barzillai. But having another daughter, and who he was informed was partial to David, he proposes her to him, but on this condition, that he expected no dowry,\* only, for the exercise of his valour, and to revenge the king on his enemies, that he should slay one hundred Philistines. David would probably have declined the honour, of alliance to the king by this daughter, as he had by the other; but being now pressed in point of honour, he could not excuse himself without the imputation of cowardice; and therefore, accepting the terms, with a select number of men he made an incursion upon the Philistines within the time prescribed by Saul, and slew two hundred of them, as a double dowry for Saul's daughter. David's death had been more welcome to Saul than this; however, having so publicly engaged himself, he could not avoid the fulfilment of his promise, and therefore gave him his daughter Michal. In the next engagement against the enemy, David so signalized himself above all the officers of the army, that his courage and conduct were the only themes of applause.

Saul being still defeated in all his attempts and designs against David, resolves to engage his whole family in his resentment, and charges Jonathan and all his servants to kill him. Jonathan abhorred the thought of such ingratitude and inhumanity; and being doubly engaged to David as a brother and a friend, to prevent his being surprised, gave him timely notice of the impending danger, advising him to secure himself till the morning, in which time he would take an opportunity of expostulating with his father on the unreasonableness of such a design. David being retired to a place of security, Jonathan talks with his father, and so successfully pleaded David's merit and

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\* *Dowry.* It was the custom of those times, for men (not as now, to receive portions with their wives, but) to give dowries for their wives.

innocence, that Saul (though in appearance only) is reconciled to David; and Jonathan introduces him into his presence. But David's fame still increasing, and the jealousy of Saul augmenting, it burst out again with more vehemence than before. For being seized with another frantic fit, David was sent for to allay his passion with his harp; and Saul taking the opportunity while David was engaged in touching the instrument, darted his javelin at him; but David having a watchful eye upon him, as being before apprised of his malice, nimbly stepped aside, and withdrew to his own house; whither Saul sent his guards to beset the house and kill him. Michal, David's wife, acquainted him with the design, and in tender concern for his safety soon contrived a way for his escape, by letting him down through a window; from whence by the help of the dark night, he once more defeated Saul's wicked intent. And to prevent a quick pursuit, when the guards entered the house to search for him, Michal told them he was sick in bed. The guards return to the king with this answer; who, thinking now he had him secure, commands them to bring him in his bed before him. The guards obey, but return again, telling him that David had escaped.

David being thus happily preserved by the contrivance of his wife, Saul, looking upon her as the author of it, reproved her severely; but she in excuse told him that her husband threatened to kill her, if she attempted to detain him.

Profiting by the darkness of the night, and his knowledge of the bye-roads, David made the best of his way to Ramah, where his good friend Samuel dwelt, to whom he made his complaint, and related the cause of his coming: for David, finding hitherto that all human means for his security were likely to prove ineffectual, threw himself upon God's more immediate protection, in flying to Samuel; who for his better safety takes him to Najoth,\*

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\* *Najoth* was a school or college in or near the city of Ramah. The Chaldee paraphrase calls it, *The house of Learning*; that is, a college, or religious house,

where they both dwelt. Saul soon had notice where David was, and notwithstanding the sanctity due to that holy place, impiously offers to violate the privilege of this sacred asylum, by sending messengers to take David from thence: who coming into the presence of these holy persons, and finding Samuel instructing them, the Spirit of God came upon them, and they behaved themselves as the rest did. Saul's restless malice rendered him hitherto incapable of admonition; for having sent messengers three times successively, and receiving no satisfaction, at length he goes himself; but as he was on the way, the Spirit of God came upon him also, and he went on prophesying\* till he came to the place where Samuel and David were; and being come thither, he stripped† himself

where those were educated that were set apart or devoted to the service of God, whom the Holy Scripture generally calls Prophets; which places in those times obtained the privilege of a sanctuary.

\* *Prophesying*. This being a word of an extensive signification, interpreters take it in this place for singing of psalms, and hymns of thanksgiving and praise.

† *Stripped*. This, and other texts, that the versions make to say, that they were *stript* and went *naked*, as 1 Sam. xix. 24. Isa. xx. 2, 3, 4. Mich. i. 8. and John xxi. 7, cannot be read without conceiving that the persons spoken of in them were altogether *naked*; though there is nothing more false; as will easily appear to those who consider the true signification of the words in the original, or the circumstances of the places in particular. For, 1. The words of the original, which are rendered *naked*, or to be *naked*, signify often nothing else, but to have a part of the body uncovered, as the versions translate it, 2 Sam. vi. 20, or only to be without a gown or upper garment, according to the custom of the Eastern people, and of the Romans; who, when they went abroad or made any public appearance, wore a long upper garment, called in Latin, *Toga*; as may be seen in several authors, who prove that the Greeks and Latins have often employed the words which signify *naked* in this sense. Nor, 2. Is it at all probable, that the prophets could have been guilty of such indecency, as to go altogether naked, in public or in private, God having always testified his abhorrence of nudity; and having expressly enjoined the priests to wear several garments to cover the body, that thus they might be distinguished from the Pagan priests, who were not ashamed to appear naked. And, 3. We need only consider the circumstances, which Isaiah and St. John remark, when they speak thus, to be persuaded, that they did not mean being altoge-



of his upper garment, and lay almost naked on the ground that day and the next night. This gave David an opportunity of escaping from Saul; and, leaving him at Najoth, he hastened back to his friend Jonathan, and consulted with him how to secure himself from his father's malice, which would not allow him to rest in any place. Jonathan assured him of his best offices, and to comfort David, solemnly renewed the friendship which they had both before sworn to each other, and promised to let him know if he could make any discovery of Saul's designs against his life. Then directing him where to conceal himself for a few days, he gave him a signal whether or not to appear, which was to be made by shooting an arrow; and then mutually embracing, they parted.

The feast of the New Moon being at hand, Saul returned from Najoth to celebrate it, and taking his seat as usual at the table, the rest of the company sat down, but David's place was vacant. Saul took no public notice of his absence the first day; but missing him the second day also, he asked his son Jonathan what was become of the son of Jesse? (for so he called him in contempt.) Jonathan answered that he had desired leave to attend the anniversary feast of his family at Bethlehem, and that this was the cause of his absence. Saul well

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ther naked: for God commanded Isaiah to put off his sackcloth, and to go bare-foot for three years, only to denote, that the Egyptians and Arabians were to be carried away captive in the same manner by the Assyrians. But it was never the custom to strip captives altogether naked, but only to strip them of their best clothes, and to give them worse and shorter, that they might be the more fit for service, as Sanctius and Grotius have observed. Besides, it is not probable that Isaiah could have lived three whole years without any clothes to cover him. We must therefore render the sentence, "That Saul stripped himself of his upper garment, and lay almost naked on the ground;" in the same sense that Aurelius Victor, speaking of those who were sent to Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, to bring him to the Senate to be made Dictator, says, that they found him naked, ploughing on the other side of the Tyber. For it were ridiculous to imagine that he was altogether naked. And Titus Livius relating the same story, observes, that he called to his wife Rucca for his gown or *toga*, that he might appear fit to accompany them.



knew the intimacy that subsisted between them, and suspecting Jonathan in this excuse, he could not contain himself, but in a violent and indecent rage reproached him ; telling him that David's friendship would be fatal to him, for as long as the son of Jesse lived, he would not inherit the kingdom : therefore he commanded him to produce him. Notwithstanding this unkind language, Jonathan could not forbear to be David's advocate, and mildly expostulates with his father, inquiring why he thus persecuted David ? This so enraged Saul, that, breaking through all the ties of paternal love, he threw his javelin at his son with an intent to kill him. Jonathan avoided the blow, and withdrew in haste ; and next morning, taking his bow with him, he went into the field, and gave the appointed signal to David, to appear. They affectionately embrace, and Jonathan gives David a faithful account of all that had passed between his father and himself. Upon which, David, finding he could no longer be safe in any place within the reach of Saul, resolves to go farther off ; and taking leave of Jonathan, they mutually swore perpetual friendship, and parted.

David directs his course to Nob, a city belonging to the priests, where the tabernacle then was, that he might, by the help of Ahimelech the priest, inquire of the Lord what course he should take. Ahimelech, who knew his quality and person, but not that he was out of favour, was surprised to see him without suitable attendants, and inquired the cause ; this David thought proper to conceal, pretending that he was sent on a secret expedition, and in such haste that he had neglected to make provision for himself and those few with him ; therefore he requested that if he had any bread, he would spare him some. The priest answered that he had no common bread, but he had some consecrated bread, which, in this necessity, he gave him. Then David asked him, if he had any arms ? He replied, that he had no arms except the sword\* of Go-

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\* *Sword.* David having slain Goliath presented his head to Saul, and afterwards brought it to Jerusalem : but whether then or some time after is uncertain. The

liah whom he slew; he might have that if he pleased. David gladly accepted it, saying, there was none like it. David pretending he came in the king's name, and that he was about the king's business, thus unhappily induced Ahimelech to accommodate him and to appear as an accomplice with an outlaw; a circumstance that soon proved of fatal consequence; for it happened at that time that Doeg\* the king's herdsman was there, who soon after reported this interview to Saul.

David being refreshed, began to think of some place of security, which he knew that this city, though a privileged place, could not long afford, if Saul should be informed of his retreat, and which was but too probable from Doeg's being privy to it: not thinking himself safe, therefore, in any part of Saul's territories, he determines on going to Achish, the Philistine king of Gath. But he had not been long there before he was discovered and pointed out to be the person who had so formidably defeated the Philistines. David, to elude the discovery, pretended to be mad, and acted the part of a lunatic so artfully, that the king reprehended the informers, which gave him an opportunity of escaping from thence, and flying to the town of Adullam;† whither all his family resorted to him; as did several malecontents, debtors, and

Giant's armour, as his own spoil, he laid up in his tent; only the sword, with which he cut off his head, seems by 1 Sam. xxi. 9, to have been dedicated to the Lord, and delivered to the priest to keep, as a monument of the victory, and of Israel's deliverance.

\* *Doeg*. Whether Doeg was detained here by a vow, or by reason of the Sabbath, or on what other occasion, is uncertain. But it is probable, that his presence at the time of this interview between David and Ahimelech was the reason why David feigned the story of his being sent by the king; that if (which was likely, and which David suspected) Doeg should turn informer, the priest might have the king's name and authority to plead in his own justification, for having entertained David in so friendly a manner.

† *Adullam*. It was a town in the tribe of Judah. Here was a rock of the same name, in which was a cave, naturally strong and well fortified, to which David fled from Saul.

other distressed persons, to the number of four hundred men, who made him their captain.

David, assured that the malice of Saul would soon detect him, and that this little army would prove but a slender security to him, out of a tender regard for the safety of his father and mother, addressed himself to the king of Moab, who was an enemy to Saul, and desired his protection. Which having obtained, he tarried with them till the prophet Gad came, and advised him to quit Moab, and return to the land of Judah: upon which David leaving Moab, went into the forest of Hareth.

While David remained in this concealment, Saul was in Gibeah, where, being informed that David had raised forces in his own defence, he violently upbraids the officers of his army with criminally refusing to revenge him on his enemy, and accused them of joining with his son in a conspiracy against their king. The officers, conscious of their perfect innocence, made no reply.

At this juncture, Doeg, who had seen David at Nob, when Ahimelech the priest relieved him, very officiously stepped in, and informed the king of all that had passed there between David and Ahimelech. Saul, glad of any opportunity to vent his passion, and revenge himself on any who seemed to countenance David, sent for Ahimelech and all the priests who were in Nob, to come and appear before him. The priests, not suspecting the cruel project of Saul, readily obeyed, and presented themselves before him. The king furiously charged them with the conspiracy. Ahimelech being entirely innocent, thus defended himself against the king's unjust charge: "How could I do less than entertain a person so honourable as David, and so highly in favour with my prince? Especially when he came in the king's name, and about his affairs? As to my inquiring of the Lord for him, it was not the first time; thou knowest I have often inquired of the Lord for him before. And as to any conspiracy against thee, far be it from me; I can safely answer for myself and family, we know nothing of it."

This defence, though perfectly just, made no impression on the obdurate heart of Saul; but, determined in his



bloody purpose, he rashly pronounces sentence against innocent Ahimelech and his whole family, and commands his guards to put them to the sword. The guards having listened to the priest's defence, in abhorrence of so unjust and cruel a sentence, would not move a hand in its execution. Whereupon, the king, impatient at the delay of executing his revenge, looking about him, and seeing Doeg in his presence, commands him to dispatch the priests; which he readily did, and with his sacrilegious hand slew eighty-five of them. Nor did Saul's resentment stop here; this stream of innocent blood was not sufficient to glut his rage; he sends a party to Nob, the city of the priests, with command to put all the inhabitants, men, women, and children, to the sword,\* and to spare not so much as the very cattle. Of all that belonged to Ahimelech, one only escaped the slaughter, namely, Abiathar, a young son of Ahimelech, who making his escape to David, now at Keilah, gave him the sad account of the massacre of the Lord's priests; which though David lamented the more, as looking upon himself to be the innocent occasion of it, by his going to Nob; yet he was the less surprised at it, because he had observed that Doeg was there at that time, and who, he might reasonably suppose, would not fail to inform† Saul of all that passed‡ there between him and Ahimelech. David, to comfort Abiathar, assures him of his protection, telling him he should share the same fortune with himself.

While Saul was thus embruing his wicked hands in

\* *Sword.* This execution of the priests, though extremely unjust, cruel, and inhuman in Saul, was yet just from God; being the completion of that judgment denounced long before by God, against Eli and his house, 1 Sam. ii. 31.

† *Inform.* This treachery of Doeg, and cruelty of Saul upon the priests, gave occasion to David to compose the fifty-second Psalm.

‡ *Passed.* This in all likelihood was the reason that David pretended he was sent by the king; that Ahimelech, if examined, might alledge it in his defence; as he afterwards did.



innocent blood, David was employing his arms in the just defence of his country; for having notice that the Philistines had made an incursion upon Keilah, a city of Judah, and having first consulted the Lord by the prophet Gad, he went and relieved the place, defeating the enemy, and taking a great booty of cattle from them. Saul soon heard of David's success, and thinking that he would fortify himself in Keilah, sent troops to besiege him there. But David being distrustful of the inhabitants, notwithstanding he had lately done them great service, caused the young priest Abiathar to ask counsel of God, what he had best do in this affair; who warned him of the treacherous temper of the Keilahites, telling him, if he continued there, they would certainly deliver him up to Saul. David followed the divine advice, and with six hundred men marched out of Keilah, to seek some place of greater security: which Saul hearing, he desisted from pursuing him at that time. David retired into a wood in the desert of Ziph; of which Jonathan having received advice, he went privately to him, and encouraged him; assuring him that the Lord would not suffer him to fall into the hands of Saul. Then renewing their former league of friendship, Jonathan returned home, leaving David in the wood.\*

David was not long secure in this place; for the officious Ziphites went and acquainted the king with the place of his retreat; and assuring him that if he would send a sufficient force, they would betray David to him. Saul thanks them and commends their loyalty, but desires them to return and inform themselves more perfectly of David's haunts, and then to give him notice, that he might the more easily secure him. But David having intelligence of their intended treachery, changes his quarters, and goes to the desert of Maon, whither Saul pursues him. Here David was hard pressed; for Saul was so near him, that nothing but a valley parted them; and Saul's forces being far more numerous than those of David, he

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\* *Wood.* Here David is supposed to have written the sixty-third Psalm.

proposed to surround the mountain on which David then was, to prevent his escape. But Providence here interposed ; for a messenger came in haste to acquaint Saul, that the Philistines had invaded the land on the other side, and desired him to hasten to repel them.

Saul was obliged, for the present, to forego the gratification of his private resentment to preserve the public safety ; and therefore, withdrawing his army to march against the Philistines, he afforded David an opportunity of escaping to the strong holds of Engedi.\* But Saul having repulsed the Philistines, renews the pursuit after David ; and taking three thousand choice men with him, he went to seek him on the rocks of the wild goats, the highest and most craggy part of the country. On the way, seeing a cave, † he went into it to rest awhile, little thinking that David was so near him, who with some of his men had hid themselves in the clefts of the cave, unseen of the King, though they could see him. David's men observing him enter alone, thought this a happy opportunity of putting an end to their troubles, and advised David to make use of it, and dispatch him. But David, actuated by nobler principles, restrained them ; saying, " God forbid that I should stretch forth " my hand against the Lord's anointed." Nevertheless, to convince Saul that it was in his power to have destroyed him, he went softly to the place where his robe lay, and cut off the skirt of it. This action, though no personal detriment to Saul, yet so affected David, that he was conscious to himself of boldness and disrespect to the majesty of the king.

When Saul had retired from the cave, David went to

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\* *Engedi.* Here, or at least on this occasion, it is probable that David composed the fifty-fourth Psalm.

† *Cave.* In those countries there were very large caves in the sides of the rocks or mountains, partly natural, but probably much enlarged by art, for the sheltering of sheep from the heat of the sun. It was in this cave that David composed the hundred and forty-second Psalm.

the top of an adjacent hill, out of Saul's reach, but near enough to be heard; and calling to him, bowing with his face to the ground, he thus addressed him; "Why\*  
 " is the king persuaded to believe that David intends him  
 " any hurt? Thine eyes may see that the Lord had deli-  
 " vered thee this day into my hand in the cave; but I would  
 " not take the advantage I had of thee, for thou art the  
 " Lord's anointed. Let the skirt of thy robe witness for  
 " me, that I spared thy life when it was in my power;  
 " and that I have no evil design against thee, though thou  
 " seekest my life. The Lord judge between thee and  
 " me, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thy  
 " hand."

This generous action, and affecting address of David, made so deep an impression on Saul, that he melted into tenderness, and called him his son, acknowledging with tears his own guilt, and David's innocence. Then, concluding from the wonderful care which God had always taken of David in his deepest distress, that he should succeed to the kingdom, he told him, he was sure that the Lord would establish the kingdom of Israel in his hand; therefore he conjured him by all that was sacred, not to destroy his family. David, to satisfy his mind, swore he would do as he desired; upon which Saul returned home. But David, notwithstanding Saul's fair words, did not think it safe to trust to them, but retired to the fastnesses in the hills. †

About this time the prophet Samuel dying, the Israelites were gathered from most parts to lament his death, and to bury him among his own family at Ramah. And funerals of such importance usually taking up a long time, especially among the Israelites, David had the greater opportunity to provide for his own safety. In which time, leaving Engedi, he marched to the desert of Paran, not far from Maon; where he had been before. Here dwelt

\* *Why.* See 1 Sam. xxiv. 10.

† *Hills.* Here David is thought to have composed the fifty-seventh Psalm.



a very wealthy and powerful man, whose name was Nabal, and who was well descended, deriving his pedigree from Caleb, but of a very churlish and morose disposition. His wife, who was the reverse of her husband, was not only a beautiful woman, but very discreet and virtuous.

It happened to be the season of sheep-shearing when David was in these parts, which was a time of great entertainment and mirth among them. David hearing of this entertainment, and being probably in want of provisions for his soldiers, sent messengers to Nabal to salute him, and beg the favour of some refreshment for his men; and the more to incline him to accommodate him at this time, he ordered them to remind him of the civil behaviour of his people when they were in these parts before; that they never plundered them, nor offered any act of hostility, but lived peaceably and in amity near them. Having delivered their message, they modestly waited Nabal's answer; who, like himself, pretends not to know David, of whose fame it was impossible he should be ignorant; and, in a most scornful and cruel way of reflecting on him, cried, in contempt, "There are many servants now-a-days that run away from their masters, and on such I shall not bestow my provisions." When David heard this; it stung him to the quick; so that arming himself and commanding four hundred more to do the same, he vowed a severe revenge, which he bound with an imprecation, that he would not leave a man alive of Nabal's family. But God prevented his resentment from being carried into effect, which might have hurried him on to shed innocent blood with the guilty. It happened that one of Nabal's servants having overheard how roughly his master had dismissed David's messengers, and dreading the consequences, knowing likewise that their mistress was a prudent woman, went and acquainted her with it; advising her to find out some expedient to prevent a mischief, which they might reasonably expect for such rude and unmannerly treatment, from men who frequently had it in their power, but who were so far from injuring them, that they protected their persons and their cattle.



Abigail, the amiable wife of Nabal, knowing, full well, the churlish temper of her husband, thought it altogether in vain to consult him; and therefore immediately ordered her servant to take two hundred loaves of bread, two\* bottles of wine, five sheep ready dressed, five measures of parched corn, an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs. Having packed up this present, and laid it on asses, she ordered the servants to go before, herself following them. As she was descending a hill, she saw David coming down another, so that they both met in the valley. With great presence of mind and due respect, she addressed herself to him in such pathetic terms, that she at once disarmed the hero's rage, and pleased his generous mind. Then receiving her presents, he assured her of his protection, and she returned home overjoyed with the success of her embassy. When she came thither, she found her husband still kept open house, and feasted like a king: but observing that he had drank too much, she deferred acquainting him with what she had done till the next morning, and then told him the whole matter: which when he had heard, and considered the danger to which he had been exposed, he was so terrified with the thoughts of it, that his heart sunk within him, and he grew as inanimate as a stone,† and after languishing ten days he died.

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\* Two bottles of wine would not bear any proportion with the other parts of the present, nor answer the occasion, if they should be understood of such bottles as are now commonly in use, whether of earth, stone, or glass. But in those eastern countries they used to carry and keep wine or water in leathern bags or sacks, made on purpose to hold liquids; which vessels they called (at least we so translate them) bottles. Such were those the Gibeonites brought to Joshua's camp, which they said were worn out, rent, or torn, in their pretended long journey, Josh. ix. 13. And of such, it may be, our Saviour spake, Matt. ix. 17. where in the marginal note to our old Bibles, bottles are explained by bags of leather, or skin, wherein wine was carried on asses or camels: and of such sort of bottles as these, two might hold a quantity of wine suitable to the rest of the present which Abigail carried with her. Very large bottles made of leather are still in use in India.

† *Stone.* It is observed, that after Abigail had made Nabal sensible of the fault which he had committed; "That his heart died within him, and he became a stone." But our version rightly renders it, "and he became *as* a stone."

David hearing of Nabal's death, thanked God for avenging him on him, and preventing his shedding of blood; and afterwards calling to mind the comeliness of Abigail's person, and her excellent conduct when she came to divert his resentment, he sent his servants to inform her that he had a desire to take her to be his wife. Abigail, to shew how much she thought herself honoured by the proposal, told the servants, she desired no greater honour than to wash their lord's feet. Then dressing herself, and taking five maids with her, she went with the messengers and came to David, and became his wife. Soon after which, he married another, named Ahinoam, a Jezreelite; but his first wife, Saul's daughter, was by her father given to Phalti the son of Laish.

The solemnity of Samuel's funeral being finished, and Saul having returned to Gibeah, the Ziphites again informed him that David was about the mountain Hachilah, near the wilderness. Upon which, Saul taking three thousand men with him, goes in pursuit of David; who being then in the wilderness, and having by his spies obtained certain intelligence of the place where Saul lay encamped, he first went privately by himself to observe the situation of the camp; and afterwards taking his cousin Abishai with him, they went by night, and found Saul within the trench fast asleep, his general Abner, and the rest of his army lying round about him in the same

Where we may likewise observe, that the particle *as* is often to be supplied, when the Scripture affirms something of another which is not absolutely of the same nature. For no man can imagine, that Nabal was turned into a stone, though the original expressly says he was; that "he became a stone." The Latin poets have employed the same way of speaking to express a great surprise. Ovid represents Ariadne expressing her grief and astonishment upon the flight of Theseus, who had abandoned her in the island Dia, as if she had been turned into a rock. The fable says that Niobe was turned into a statue of stone. But Cicero in Tuscul, observes that this fiction only represents her perpetual silence in her mourning; and Paphatus, that it signifies, that Niobe having made a statue of stone for herself after her children's death, placed it upon their sepulchre.

posture. Abishai would gladly have seized this opportunity of killing Saul : but David would not suffer him, for the same reason that he had saved his life in the cave. But he bade Abishai take the spear that stuck in the ground near him, and the cruise of water, and follow him. When they arrived at the top of the hill on the other side, and were out of danger, David called to Abner, and reproved him severely, for want of attention to his sovereign ; “ As the Lord liveth ye deserve to die for neglecting thus “ the Lord’s anointed. See here the king’s spear, and the “ cruise of water that was at his bolster !” Saul hearing David’s voice, called him by his name. David then expostulated with him, in much the same manner as he did after his escape from the cave ; adding this aggravation of his severity, that by driving him from the inheritance of the Lord, in obliging him to go and converse with the uncircumcised for refuge, they did in effect force him to serve other gods. David pleaded also his own insignificance, to be made the object of pursuit by the army of Saul. The king, once more subdued by the generous conduct of David, acknowledged his own cruelty and folly ; and pronouncing a blessing on him, together with a prediction of his ultimate success, he departed homewards ; and David returned to his associates.

And now David was at leisure calmly to consider what steps to take for his future safety. Knowing the instability of Saul’s temper, notwithstanding his specious declarations of peace, and that it would be unsafe to remain within his dominions, he resolves at last to go over to the Philistines ; thinking, that when Saul heard he was not among his own people, he would forbear to pursue or enquire after him. Wherefore, having obtained safe conduct from Achish at Gath, he went over with the six hundred men that were with him, and dwelt with Achish at Gath, taking with him his two wives, Abigail and Ahinoam. Not satisfied, however, with the accommodations of Gath, he desired Achish to give him the town of Ziklag ; which was granted, and he lived more unobserved here than in the royal city ; which was David’s object in removing from Gath.



While he continued here, several of Saul's best\* soldiers and ablest officers came over to him; some of whom were of the tribe of Gad, but the greater part were of the tribe of Benjamin, Saul's brethren; whom, though David at first suspected, yet he at length found reason to confide in, and promoted them to commands. Strengthened with these recruits, David made excursions against the Amalekites, and induced king Achish to suppose, that the booty he had brought to Ziklag, was taken from the Israelites. Achish believing this, was much gratified; and thinking that David hereby rendered himself odious to his own people, thought he might put the greater confidence in him, and concluded that he was certain of his future assistance. To prevent any discovery of this mistake, a favourable opportunity now presented itself; for the Philistines making war against Israel, Achish told David he would now try his fidelity, desiring him to prepare his men to accompany him in this campaign. David was obliged to comply, though doubtless it was contrary to his inclination to fight against his own people; and it would have been highly dishonourable and ungrateful to betray a prince, who had so courteously treated him, and generously confided in him. But Providence found out an expedient to preserve the honour of David: for the Philistines rendezvousing at Aphek,† the men of quality, seeing David in the rear with their king, were ready to mutiny; and though the king assured them that he was entirely in his interest, they would not trust him, but insisted on his being dismissed previously to the action, for fear of treachery. Achish, wisely judging it improper to dispute with them when he was just about to engage the enemy, calling David aside, told him how the case stood, and acknowledging his services, advised him to retire to Ziklag.

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\* *Best.* The names of those that came to David at Ziklag are registered in 1 Chrou. xii.

† *Aphek.* See 1 Sam. xxix. which according to the series of time must come before the 28th chap.



Though David secretly rejoiced in this decision, yet, dissimbling his feelings, he seemed to resent it, which rendered Achish more importunate for his departure. David, in his march from Ziklag in this expedition, had very considerably increased his number; for some of the tribe of Manasseh joined him as he went, and others in his return, who afterwards rendered him considerable service.

Saul prepares to oppose the Philistines; but having taken a view of the Philistine army, while they lay encamped at Shunem, before they came to Aphek, he was seized with a terrible panic; and what increased his perplexity was, that he had consulted the Lord, but received no answer. Nor was it likely to be otherwise; for he had destroyed the priests, and Samuel the prophet was dead. But he was determined to procure advice by some means or other; and though he had banished all the wizards, and those that made use of familiar spirits, yet he commanded his servants to seek for a woman who had a familiar spirit, that he might obtain from her a knowledge of his fate. They informed him there was a woman at Endor who was a sorceress: upon which, Saul, disguising himself, took two servants with him, and went to her, desiring her to raise up the person he should name. The woman suspecting him to be a spy, refused to oblige him; but Saul swearing to her by the Lord, that no harm should happen to her, she consented, and asked him whom she should cause to appear? He told her, Samuel. She then raised up (as she supposed) an evil spirit, which came in the likeness of Samuel; as soon as she saw it, she cried out to Saul, and said, "Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul."\* He bade her not be afraid, and asked her what she had seen? She told him, she saw gods ascending out of the earth. Saul, not satisfied with this answer, asked her of what form he was that was coming up? She replied, "An old man is coming up, covered with

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\* *Saul.* It is to be supposed, that she learned from the spirit whom she had raised, that it was Saul who had employed her.

“ a mantle.” Saul concluding it to be Samuel, as soon as he saw the apparition, bowed to the ground. The apparition then asked Saul, “ Why he had disquieted him?” Saul, to excuse himself, answered that “ he was in great distress; for the Philistines, with a powerful army, had invaded him, and God had deserted him, refusing to give an answer to his addresses.” “ Why then (said the apparition) dost thou ask of me, since the Lord is departed from thee, and become thine enemy? The Lord hath done as he spake by me; for he hath rent the kingdom from thee, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David. This, thy disobedience hath brought upon thee, in sparing Amalek, whom God commanded thee to destroy. To-morrow shalt thou and Israel fall into the hands of the Philistines, and thou and thy sons be with me.” This doom so affected Saul, that he fell on the ground as dead; upon which the woman, and his servants knowing that he had fasted long, and thinking he might be dispirited for want of refreshment, desired him to eat, which he refused at first, but at last yielded to their importunity, and did eat of what they set before him; which when he had done, he returned to the camp.\*

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\* *Camp.* It has been supposed, that the person who appeared to Saul was Satan himself, or some evil spirit, assuming the character of Samuel. But we have no right to conclude from the words of the sacred history, that it was any other than the very prophet, whose name is mentioned. The solemn address, here made to Saul, was such as suited the messenger of the Lord, in his life time neglected and despised by the king, and now commissioned to ratify his former declarations.—But it is objected, that it were absurd and impious to imagine, a wicked woman could have power to summon a departed saint, by the profane arts of divination. This is readily granted; and we contend, that the appearance was not effected by the influence of the witch, and that it was altogether different to what she had expected and desired; for she was much terrified by it. But we see no inconsistency in allowing, that God himself interposed, at the very time that Satan was consulted, and sent his servant to declare the doom of an obdurate sinner. In the same manner, the sorceries of Balak, the king of Moab, were over-ruled by a divine impulse upon the mind of Balaam, who was constrained to pronounce a sentence, quite opposite to his own wishes, and to those of the prince who had employed him: Numb. xxiii. Thus also, when

While Saul laboured under these heavy pressures, David was shocked with a sudden and unexpected calamity: for when, after three days' weary march, he returned from the Philistines' camp to Ziklag, to his great grief and surprise he found the town in ashes; his wives, and all the women and children carried away captives; and their goods and cattle plundered: and that which aggravated the misfortune was, the people mutinied against David as the occasion of it. David, in this distress, applies himself to the Lord, by the priest Abiathar, to know what measures he should take; who advises him to pursue the enemy and promises success. David proceeds; but after three days' march, two hundred of his men were so fatigued, that they were left behind at the brook Besor, while he and the other four hundred continued the pursuit. On their way they overtook a poor straggler, half dead with hunger, who, when they had refreshed him, informed them that he was an Egyptian, but servant to an Amalekite\*, which nation had made an incursion into Judah and had burnt Ziklag; and that, having fallen sick by the way, his master had left him. David asking him whether he could direct them to the place where they were, he told him, if he would neither kill him, nor deliver him up to his master, he would bring him to the place; which he accordingly did, where this party of the Amalekites lay, in a very careless manner, sporting and rejoicing over their plunder. David surprising them, soon routed them, putting all their foot to the sword. Thus he recovered, not only his two wives, and what the Amalekites

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Ahaziah, under a dangerous disease, had dispatched messengers to ask information of Baal-zebul as to the event, hoping, doubtless, for a favourable answer, the Lord God, to manifest His abhorrence of the wicked enterprise, commanded Elijah to meet them by the way, and to assure them from Him, that the king should certainly die: 2 Kings, i.—*Robinson's Scripture Characters, Vol. ii. p. 63.*

\* *Amalekite.* This incursion of the Amalekites was in revenge for the ravage and devastation which David had made among them upon his removing from Gath to Ziklag.

had plundered from him, but all that they had taken from others in that expedition.

When he returned to Besor, the two hundred men whom he had left there, came out to congratulate him on his good success, whom he courteously saluted, and, after some controversy, distributed an equal share of the spoils to them. And returning to Ziklag, he sent presents to his friends of Judah, where he and his men had been sheltered and entertained.

While David was thus employed in rescuing his wives, and recovering his property, the two armies of the Israelites and Philistines engaged. But the Israelites being forced to give way, fled to Mount Gilboa, where many of them dropped. The Philistines closely pursued Saul and his sons, three of whom, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, fell in the pursuit; and soon after, Saul, being hard pressed by the enemy's archers, was severely wounded. Finding himself not likely to live, and dreading to fall alive into the enemy's hand, he ordered his armour-bearer to run him through with his sword; which he refusing, Saul fell upon his own sword, and expired; which his faithful armour-bearer perceiving, drew his sword, and dispatched himself. The Philistines, stripping the dead, found the bodies of Saul and his three sons; cut off Saul's head, hung up his armour in the temple of Ashtaroth, and his body on the walls of Bethshan. Which, when the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead heard, selecting a party of their best men, they marched by night, and brought away the bodies of Saul and his three sons to Jabesh, and burning them, they buried the bones under a tree there; after which, in token of mourning, they fasted seven days.\*

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\* The death of Saul is extremely affecting. We see a life of disobedience and cruelty, closed by suicide. At his commencement some hopeful appearances of religion were discernible, but soon departing from the plain line of duty, he became more and more vile. His formality, hypocrisy, and wilful disobedience, at length issue in despair. Let us dread the indulgence of any known sin, lest, like him, we fall by little and little. The execrable impiety of consulting a witch, a thing so contrary to reason as well as the express law of God, (see Deut. xviii. 10 and 11)



David had not been more than two days at Ziklag, before the sad news of this defeat was brought to him by an Amalekite, who, giving a particular account of the action, produced Saul's crown and bracelet, for a confirmation of his death; adding, that at his own request he had dispatched him. David asked him, "How he dared to destroy the Lord's anointed: thy blood (said he) be upon thine own head, for thine own mouth hath convicted thee." Then calling to one of his guards, he ordered him to dispatch the Amalekite. After which David lamented over Saul and Jonathan in a Funeral Elegy.

Thy glory, Israel! and thy beauty mourn!  
 'Tis vanish'd, never, never to return.  
 Ah! who in feeble mortal's strength would trust?  
 Whose glory is so near allied to dust!

O tell it not in Gath's triumphing gate,  
 Nor in the streets of Askalon relate;  
 Lest Capthor's daughters should insulting cry,  
 Their Dagon conquers Him who rules the sky.

O fatal Gilboa, where my friend was slain;  
 No dew on thee descend nor kindly rain!  
 No corn nor wine thy blasted surface yield,  
 Accurs'd and burnt, as Sodom's dismal field:  
 For there was lost the warrior's mighty shield,  
 The shield of Saul was lost; his sacred head,  
 Tho' the blest oil was round his temples shed,  
 Profan'd and mingled with the vulgar dead!

Thy warlike bow was never drawn in vain,  
 Thy arrows drank the blood of thousands slain.  
 What armies fell by Saul's victorious sword,  
 Too faithful now to its despairing Lord?

Princely his stature, charming was his air;  
 With him alone could Jonathan compare:  
 Lovely in life, in death too near allied,  
 Not death itself their friendship could divide:

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seems to have filled up the measure of Saul's iniquities, and left him to the stroke of Divine vengeance. Any consultation with fortune-tellers is an express breach of the law of God.

Swifter than eagles cut their airy way,  
Stronger than lions, when they seize their prey.

Mourn all ye Loves ! Ye tender virgins mourn !  
Your flowry wreaths to Cypress' garlands turn :  
Mourn your lov'd monarch's lamentable fate,  
On whom so oft your charming choir did wait,  
As he from fight return'd in kingly state :  
For you he conquer'd ; you with him did share  
The wealth of peace, and glorious spoils of war :  
Lay by your purple robes from Sidon's shore,  
And wear your splendid coronets no more ;  
For Saul, who gave them, generous Saul is lost,  
And silent shades receive his mighty ghost.

How are the mighty fall'n ! Their strength in vain !  
O Jonathan ! Thou wert in battle slain !  
Stretch'd on the earth, thy lifeless limbs lie cold,  
Nor those dear eyes must I again behold.  
O Jonathan ! How shall I Thee commend !  
My more than brother, and my more than friend !  
My life, my Jonathan ! And can we part ?  
I feel thy loss hangs heavy on my heart.  
With mortal anguish is my soul oppress'd,  
I wear thy bleeding image in my breast.  
Thy friendship did the tenderest love excel ;  
'Twas like thyself, 'twas all a miracle :  
A pure, a constant, and a heavenly fire,  
Beyond the softer sex's kind desire.

How are the mighty fall'n ! Their fate deplore !  
Thy sword, thy spear and shield, O Israel, are no more.

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A  
COMPLETE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF THE  
*Holy Bible.*

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*BOOK THE SIXTH.*

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**D**AVID being at Ziklag when Saul was slain, and not knowing what step to take, consulted the Lord ; for he had the High Priest and the Ephod at hand. He was directed to go up to Hebron ; which accordingly he did, taking his wives and all his people with him. While he was here, the men of Judah came to congratulate him on his return, and offered him the crown, which he accepted, and was by them anointed king of Judah. On the other hand, Abner, the son of Ner, General of Saul's army, proclaimed Ishbosheth the son of Saul, who was acknowledged by all the other tribes.

Upon this division of the kingdom, a bloody war commenced between the two kings and their subjects ; Judah following David, and Israel Ishbosheth. There were many skirmishes between the forces of the rival kings, but none so remarkable as that which Abner occasioned, by sending a challenge to Joab, David's general, demanding twelve men, whom he would match, and who should fight single-handed. Joab agreed, and sent twelve men, who engaging each his man, all fell upon the spot. This so fired the soldiers on each side, that the armies presently joining, a sharp battle ensued ; wherein Abner was

routed, and himself forced to fly. In the pursuit, Asahel, Joab's younger brother, a young man remarkable for his speed and agility, pursued Abner, who knew him and advised him to return, for he was unwilling to kill him; but young Asahel, fond of the honour of taking the General prisoner, would not be persuaded to leave him; upon which Abner making a stand, thrust him through the body with his spear, and he died on the spot. Joab, and Abishai his other brother, and the rest of the army who pursued Abner, seeing Asahel lie dead on the ground, halted; which gave Abner time to rally his scattered forces, and drawing into one body, he made a stand with them on the top of a hill, where he could not easily be attacked. Then sounding a parley, he called to Joab, and reminding him that they were all brethren, both by nation and religion, each army retreated, Abner with his to Mahanaim, and Joab with his to Hebron. The loss on Abner's side being three hundred and sixty men; and that on Joab's but nineteen.

This war continued for some years; in which time David always gained ground of Ishbosheth; which advantage was much improved by an oversight of Ishbosheth, who quarreling with Abner, for profaning his father's ashes, as he thought, in taking Rizpah, Saul's concubine, to him, Abner not only reproached him for his ingratitude to him, who had set the crown on his head, but secretly, at the same time, corresponded with David, and at last promised to acknowledge his title, and use his interest to bring all Israel over to him. David, who knew the value of the man, would not readily seem to comply with his proposal, but making a seeming difficulty of it, required a previous condition of him; which was, That he would receive him upon no other terms, than that of bringing his wife Michal to him. To facilitate this, David sent ambassadors to Ishbosheth to demand Michal; who took her from her husband Phaltiel, and sent her to David, Phaltiel following her weeping as far as Bahurim, where Abner meeting with him, ordered him to return.



After this, Abner began to treat with the chiefs of Israel, and particularly with the Benjamites, who were more immediately concerned for Saul's family; all of whom he brought over to David's interest, and then, attended only with twenty men, he went and presented himself to David; who received them courteously, and entertained them at a feast. Abner was pleased with his reception; for taking his leave of David that time, he promised to go and bring in all Israel to him. Abner was no sooner gone from Hebron, than Joab, David's General, returned from an expedition laden with the spoils of the Philistines; and being soon informed that Abner had been there, and how he had been received, a fatal jealousy possessed him; and his prejudice took rise, not so much from the death of his brother Asahel, whom Abner slew fairly in his own defence, as from the fear of being supplanted by him in his command: for Abner was not only a man of great interest among all the other tribes, but esteemed a General of excellent courage and conduct.

In this ill humour Joab goes to the king, and in a very rude manner blames him for what he had done, assuring him that Abner came only as a spy; and going out of the presence, he sends messengers after Abner to let him know that the king had something of moment to communicate to him, which he had before forgot. Abner obeys; and Joab, waiting for him at Hebron, and saluting him under a pretence of friendship, most basely stabbed him.

This treacherous action so much affected David, that he thought he could not do enough to clear himself of it, laying this murder at Joab's door, and the curse of it on him and his posterity. Then commanding a general mourning, he ordered the funeral; himself as chief mourner following the corpse. This took off all suspicion from David in the eye of the public; but to his domestics he was more particular in his lamentation of Abner's loss, and plainly pointed at the very cause why Joab slew Abner, for, said he, "Those sons of Zeruah, Joab and

“ Abishai, take the advantage of my unsettled state, and  
“ are too hard for me, therefore I cannot call them to an  
“ account for it; but must leave them to the Lord to  
“ requite them.” Besides the baseness of the fact, David  
had great reason to lament the death of Abner: for in  
him he lost a very useful and serviceable friend, and to  
all appearance, the measures taken for uniting the two  
kingdoms of Judah and Israel had been broken, if Ishbo-  
sheth had lived a little longer. But this was prevented  
by a no less treacherous and inhuman murder than that of  
Abner. When the unhappy Ishbosheth heard of Abner’s  
death, and consequently lost all hopes of recovering his  
assistance, (which possibly he might entertain so long as  
he lived,) he became dispirited, and not only neglected  
himself, but was disregarded by others; which gave an op-  
portunity to two ruffians to conspire his death. These  
regicides, coming to Ishbosheth’s house under pretence of  
fetching wheat, went directly to his bedchamber, where,  
it being the heat of the day, they found him lying on his  
bed asleep: in which condition they slew him, and cut-  
ting off his head, they carried it away with them, and got  
off undiscovered. Then making the best of their way to  
Hebron, where they thought they should be welcome  
guests, they presented the head, with this short compli-  
ment, to David: “ Behold the head of Ishbosheth, the son  
“ of Saul, thine enemy, who sought thy life; the Lord  
“ hath avenged the king this day of Saul and of his fa-  
“ mily.” David was so far from rejoicing at the death of  
his rival, that the sight of the head of the murdered  
prince struck him with horror and indignation, and in a  
just rage, passing sentence upon the assassins, he com-  
manded his guards to fall upon them, which they imme-  
diately did, and cutting off their heads and hands, hanged  
them over the pool in Hebron, for a terror to all regi-  
cides, who should dare to lay their profane hands on the  
sacred person of their king: but the head of Ishbosheth  
they buried in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

This murder of Ishbosheth made way for the union of  
the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah: for all the tribes

came in to David at Hebron, and acknowledged him for their king; where he was by general consent anointed, and David feasted them for three days.

David being now at the head of the united forces of Israel and Judah, begins to think of enlarging his territories, which he commences by attacking Jerusalem, the metropolis of the Jebusites; who, trusting to the strength of the place, when David summoned them to surrender, in derision answered, that though there were none but the blind and lame to defend it, he with all his forces could not take it. But they soon found their mistake; for David, resolving to correct their insolence, proclaimed throughout the army, that whosoever should take the fort should be Captain-General of all his forces. Joab, a bold enterprising man, who before had the command of the forces of Judah, undertook and performed it; the buildings of which fort David afterwards enlarged, and converted into a palace; and after other improvements of the town, he called it the City of David.

David's affairs being in this flourishing condition, his fame soon spread among the neighbouring princes; one of whom, Hiram king of Tyre, sent ambassadors to congratulate him on his accession to the crown, with a present of cedars, and workmen to build him a palace. But the Philistine princes had other thoughts of David's success, looking upon his increasing greatness to be a fatal presage of their ruin; and therefore they thought to put a stop to his further encroachments on them, by attacking him first; in order to which they collected a considerable army, and came and encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. David continued in the citadel, till he had consulted the Lord; who assuring him of success, he marches against the enemy, whom he assaulted with such vigour, that he soon routed them, and they fled in so much haste that they left their gods behind them; which the king commanded to be burnt.

This defeat did not discourage the Philistines; for they soon recruited their forces, and came and encamped in the same place, where they had before been routed. David, though flushed with his late victory, would not



presume upon that success; but to proceed securely, he again consults the Lord, who now alters his march, and orders him not directly to engage, but to take a compass behind the enemy, and fall upon them opposite to the mulberry trees; and when he should hear the sound\* or rushing of the trees, then to engage, for the Lord would then go out before him. David observed the sacred orders, and accordingly succeeded, giving the Philistines such a defeat, that they did not for a considerable time after give Israel any disturbance.

A time of peace succeeding, David proposes to his officers to summon all Israel to attend at the bringing the Ark to his capital: which was unanimously approved, and the king went with them to Kirjath-jearim, to the house of Abinadab; where the Ark had remained about fifty years.† But they were guilty of a great oversight here in removing the Ark: for either through inadvertency, or neglect of the Law,‡ which obliged the Priests to

\* *Sound.* This in the text, 2 Sam. v. 24, is called, “The sound of one going on the tops of the trees.” By which Josephus, and others, understand the agitation or shaking of the tops of the trees when there is no wind stirring. But others, not approving this, are of opinion, that the angels, whom God sent before David, v. 24, made this noise for a signal to him to engage the Philistines in the front, while another part of his army attacked them in the rear.

† *Fifty years.* The ark is said to have been twenty years in the house of Abinadab, at Kirjath-jearim, 1 Sam. vii. 1, 2. But that twenty years must be in reference to the time of the single administration of Samuel in the government: for the Ark was taken in the last year of Eli, and the Philistines kept it but seven months, 1 Samuel vi. 1. Samuel succeeding to Eli in the government; is reckoned to have governed Israel by himself twenty years before there was a king. And twenty years more are allotted to Samuel and Saul together, and Saul by himself after Samuel. So that from the death of Eli, when the Ark was taken, to the death of Saul, must be forty years. And though seven months of that time it was with the Philistines; yet David having after Saul's death reigned seven years and six months at Hebron, and some time after that in Jerusalem, before he went to fetch the Ark, it must have been fifty years, or upwards, that the Ark had been at Kirjath-jearim in the house of Abinadab.

‡ *Law.* See Numb. vii. 5.



carry the Ark upon their shoulders, they, in imitation of the Philistines, put it upon a cart, appointing Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, to drive the cart. And in this manner they proceeded, rejoicing, and playing on several sorts of instruments; till they came to the threshing-floor of Nachon, where the oxen that drew the cart, stumbling, shook it so violently, that Uzzah, fearing it should fall, officiously laid hold of the Ark to stay it; which profanation\* cost him his life, for he fell down dead immediately by it. This awful event made David afraid to carry the Ark to Jerusalem; but he left it in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite, who was a Levite; where it rested three months, and very much to Obed-Edom's advantage, for while it continued there, the Lord blessed him with a great increase of his substance.

David being informed of this, and perceiving that he had drawn a wrong conclusion in supposing Uzzah's death to be an intimation that the Lord would not have the Ark brought to him, took courage, and proposed to remove it from Obed-Edom's house to his own city; which he did with great pomp and regularity, declaring, that none ought to carry it but the priests, and disposing of every person in his proper order, the king, dressed in a linen Ephod, conducted it, singing and dancing before it, to a house which he had purposely built for it, where, when he had placed it, he offered to the Lord a great number of cattle in sacrifice. As the king passed through the city, dancing before the Ark, his wife Michal, Saul's daughter, seeing the king so engaged, entertained a very contemptuous opinion of him; for being herself the daughter of one king, and the wife of another, she thought it did not become the royal dignity for David to act the part of a singer and dancer. And when she came out to meet him, she could not forbear reproaching him, and in derision said, "How glorious was the king of Israel to-

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\* *Profanation.* This action of Uzzah's was contrary to the Law, which forbade all, but the priests, even the Levites themselves, to touch the holy things, Num. iv. 15.

“ day ! who being stripped of his royal robes, acted the  
 “ part of a fool.” David retorted her malicious jest with  
 a sober truth, and told her, “ That how vile soever he  
 “ might seem in her opinion, what he did was in honour  
 “ of that God, who had chosen him rather than her fa-  
 “ ther, or any of his family, to govern Israel. And that  
 “ he would still persist in his humility, for which, he  
 “ doubted not that he should be honoured of all those  
 “ that she thought despised him.” From this time Michal  
 never had any children.\*

The building of David's house, for which Hiram king  
 of Tyre, had furnished him with materials and workmen,  
 was now completed ; and being peaceably settled in it,  
 he was at leisure to think of religious affairs ; the first  
 of which that occurred to his mind was the building a  
 Temple. He therefore sent for Nathan the prophet,  
 and said, “ See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the  
 “ ark of God dwelleth within curtains.” Nathan took  
 the hint, and that so good an intention might not want  
 encouragement, answered, “ Go, do all that is in thine  
 “ heart, for the Lord is with thee.” But herein the  
 prophet was too forward ; for he judged of the thing  
 from his own apprehension of the goodness of it, and  
 not from the will of God, for whom it was intended,  
 and who therefore ought chiefly to have been consulted  
 therein. The same night, therefore, God gave Nathan  
 charge concerning David's design, forbidding him to  
 build a Temple, assigning for a reason, (as he himself  
 afterwards told his son Solomon) because he had shed  
 much blood. David receiving this prohibition from the  
 Lord, in obedience to his will, desists from his intended  
 building, and to express his gratitude for his gracious  
 promises to him and his posterity, he goes into the Taber-

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\* *Children.* Interpreters agree, that Michal never had any children by David, Phaltiel, or any other husband, but was naturally barren ; which here, 2 Sam. vi. 23, is confirmed upon her as a curse, for deriding her husband the king.

† *Himself.* See 1 Chron. xxii. 8.

nacle, and there prostrates\* himself on the ground before the Lord; where, after acknowledging the goodness and munificence of God in raising him from a mean condition to that which he now enjoyed, and for establishing the government in his family, he concludes with an earnest supplication, that the blessing of God might rest upon him and his house for ever.

David, finding that God had raised him to this pitch of greatness, not to build his Temple, but to fight his battles, and subdue the enemies of Israel, again engages in his former practice of war, and beginning with the royal city of Gath,† subdued it, and the towns belonging to it. Then turning his arms upon Moab, he reduced them to so low a condition, that he forced them to dismantle all their places of strength; and none lived but by his permission. Thence he went to secure the borders of the country at the river Euphrates, where Hadadezer, king of Zobah, meets him at the head of a mighty army, which David bravely engaged, and soon routed, taking seventeen hundred of his horse, and twenty thousand foot; out of the horse he reserved only enough for an hundred chariots, and hamstringed‡ the rest. The Syrians about Damascus, hearing how ill it had fared with Hadadezer, came to his assistance, but were likewise defeated, losing two and twenty thousand men; which loss so weakened them, that David put garrisons where he pleased, and made the Syrians tributaries to him. In his return from Syria, he

\* *Prostrates.* It is said, that “he sat before the Lord,” 2 Sam. vii. 18; but this is the only place in Scripture, which mentions sitting as the posture of any servant of God in religious worship; and from David’s humility, as expressed on this occasion, we may reasonably suppose that he prostrated himself before the Lord; and that the word “sat” refers to his continuance in the tabernacle.

† *Gath.* This is called, 2 Sam. viii. 1, *Metbegammab* or the *Bridle of Bondage*, because it kept the country in bondage.

‡ *Hamstringed.* The reason of this was that God had forbidden them, by his law, to multiply horses, Deut. xvii. 16, lest they should trust in the power of their cavalry, and lest by going to purchase horses in Egypt, the people should be corrupted and tempted to idolatry.



engaged a great army of Edomites, in a place called the Valley of Salt, of whom he slew eighteen thousand; the rest being forced to submit, received garrisons of him; and became tributaries to him.

From this expedition the victorious king returned, laden with the spoils of his enemies, bringing abundance of gold and brass with him, which, with the rich presents he received from the neighbouring princes, he dedicated to the service of the Lord. And now having become famous for these victories, he struck a terror into all about him, who sent presents, and courted his alliance; among whom, Toi, king of Hamath, hearing of David's success against Hadadezer, with whom he had been engaged in war, sent his son Joram to compliment him upon his success, with a superb present of plate.

Having thus subdued his enemies, and procured peace to his people, David begins to remember the former kindness of his dear friend and brother Jonathan; and inquiring whether there were any of Saul's family left, to whom he might shew favour for Jonathan's sake, Ziba, an old servant of Saul, informed him, that there was one son of Jonathan yet living, named Mephibosheth, who was lame of his feet. David, glad of this opportunity to revive and preserve the memory of his dear friend, sends for Mephibosheth, receives him courteously, assures him of his protection, restores his grandfather Saul's lands to him, and as a particular mark of his esteem, obliges him to eat at his table. Mephibosheth receives the royal bounty with great humility and respect, which David, to render still more secure to him, constitutes Ziba his steward, who with his fifteen sons and twenty servants managed the estate, while Mephibosheth dwelt at ease in Jerusalem, and ate at the king's table as one of his sons.\*

About this time, King David hearing that his old

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\* *Sons.* David had many sons; for while he was at Hebron he had six, and after he came to Jerusalem he had thirteen by his wives, besides those he had by his concubines.



friend\* Nahash, king of Ammon, was dead, and that his son Hanun had succeeded him; gratefully remembering the civilities of the father, sends an embassy of condolence to the son, and congratulates him on his accession to the crown. The ambassadors arriving at the Ammonitish court, the princes of Ammon persuaded their king that David had not sent his embassy out of any respect to the memory of the late king, or honour to the present, but to discover the weakness of the place, that he might invade it. Hanun was too easily seduced by these officious counsellors, for at their instigation he treated the ambassadors in a most vile and inhospitable manner, shaving off one half of their beards,† and cutting off their garments in the middle, and in that reproachful manner sent them away.

Being thus scandalously treated and exposed, they were ashamed to return; of which David having information, advised them to tarry at Jericho till they had retrieved‡ their disgrace by the growth of their beards; then resenting this violation of the law of nations, as became so great a prince, he sent an army, under the command of Joab, to call the inhospitable Ammonites to an account: which being expected, they had provided against, for besides their own forces, they had hired thirty-three thousand mercenaries of the Syrians, who lay

\* *Friend.* It is very probable, that Nahash king of Ammon had shewed some kindness to David in the time of his troubles under Saul, as David himself intimates in 2 Sam. x. 2.

† *Beards.* This affront was as ignominious as could be invented by the malice of man in those countries; for decalvation, or leaving any part where hair grew, bald, was a great offence; then the cutting off half the beard (which made them very ridiculous,) was a great addition to the affront, where beards were in great veneration and esteem. But the worst and most immodest of all was the cutting off half the robe or vest; whereby they were immodestly exposed, as they were no-under garments.

‡ *Retrieved.* It was an establishment in the Jewish Law, not to have any part of the head or beard shaved, Levit. xxi. 5. And therefore the Ammonites, who were neighbours to the Hebrews, knew they could not offer a greater affront to them, than cutting off their beards.

encamped at some distance in the fields, while the Ammonites lay before their own city. Joab observing this disposition of their forces, divided his own army into two bodies, one of which, composed of choice men, himself led against the mercenaries, leaving the rest with his brother Abishai, to watch the motions of the Ammonites, agreeing to relieve each other as occasion should require. Then Joab, encouraging his men, made a brisk charge upon the Syrians, and soon routed them; which the Ammonites perceiving, they were so discouraged, that they fled into the city. Joab having thus obtained an easy victory, returned in triumph to Jerusalem: where he soon received information, that the Syrians had raised a great army, to which Hadadezer had added the Syrian troops beyond the river; all which were to rendezvous at Helam, under the command of Shobach, King Hadadezer's General. David hearing of this, and uniting all his forces, marches in person with them to Helam, where he finds the enemy ready to receive and give him battle. The armies engage, and David soon defeated the Syrians, who lost their General Shobach, and about forty-seven thousand of their men. The petty kings who were tributaries to Hadadezer, finding it in vain to oppose the conquering sword of Israel, quitted his interest, and submitted to David, who resolving to chastise the insolent Ammonites yet more sharply, sent Joab next campaign with a gallant army against them; who having ravaged the country, and put the Ammonites to the sword, wherever he could meet with them, at last laid seige to Rabbah, the metropolis of the Ammonites.

Hitherto David's affairs proceeded in an uninterrupted series of success, and victory declares on his side, wherever he turns his arms. But at last, unhappy prince! he becomes his own enemy; for indulging himself in ease and luxury, the bane and rust of the mind, he insensibly gives way to loose desires, which captivate his reason, and betray him to the perpetration of the vile acts of adultery and murder. It happened that having taken his repose one afternoon on his couch, (as it was the custom for great persons in those hot countries to do) he walked

on the flat roof of the house for the benefit of the cool air ; where among the variety of objects that presented themselves to his wandering eye, that of a beautiful woman bathing in her garden unhappily ensnared him. The unguarded king sees, and is undone, and growing impatient with desire of enjoying the forbidden beauty, he enquires who she was, and is informed that she was Bathsheba, the daughter of Ammiel, and wife to Uriah the Hittite,\* an officer in his army under Joab, now at the siege of Rabbah.

Though Uriah was bravely hazarding his life for the service of his king, David ungenerously attacks him in his weakest part, his wife ; who dazzled with the glories of a court, and royal favour, too readily submits to his illicit desires. David, the better to conceal his adulterous commerce, sends Bathsheba home to her own house ; but being soon informed that she is pregnant, he begins to fear the shame of his wantonness, and therefore to conceal it, orders Joab to send Uriah to him, as if he had some particular business with him. David's design in this was, that Uriah should cohabit with his wife, and that the child, when it should be born, should pass for his. But God herein disappointed him, intending to make an example of him. For when David had asked Uriah several questions relating to the siege, in seeming kindness he desires him to go to his house and refresh himself after his journey ; and, supposing he had done so, he sent a present of meat after him. But though Uriah took leave of the king, he went not home, but slept in the guard-room. Which when David next morning understood, and asking him why he did not go home, Uriah told him, " That since the ark, with Israel and Judah abode in tents, and that his lord and general, Joab, with the rest of the king's servants were encamped in the open fields, he would not so far indulge himself as to return to his habitation, and enjoy his domestic comforts." David, being thus disappointed, tries another method ; and enter-

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\* *Hittite*. Uriah, though an Hittite by nation, was proselyted to the Jewish religion, and so marrying with this Israelitish woman, lived in Jerusalem.



taining him at his own table, so plied him with liquor, that he made him drunk, hoping then that he would go home to his own bed. But David was still disappointed, for Uriah slept that night also in the guard-room; wherefore resolving to make short work of it, he dismisses him, with a commission for his own death, to Joab; who, according to the king's instructions, posted Uriah in the most dangerous place of action, where being purposely deserted, he was exposed to the enemy's arrows and killed. Thus the innocent, the brave Uriah, fell a sacrifice to the unlawful love of his wife and his prince, who concealed the base adultery with the fouler deed of murder.

Bathsheba, hearing of her husband's death, made a formal mourning for him: but her hypocritical tears were soon wiped off, for David sent for her to his palace, and declared her his wife. And now, Joab having laid close siege to Rabbah, pressed the inhabitants so hard, that by assault he seized the water-works, which supplied the place: and having them now at his mercy, he dispatched a messenger to acquaint David that he had so straitened the town, that they could not long subsist. Joab thus declining the honour of taking the place, David, with a reinforcement, comes to crown the victory, and entering with great fury, gave no quarter to the inhabitants, plundering the town, and carrying off all the spoil. And thus he treated the other cities of the Ammonites; after which he returned in triumph to Jerusalem.

But these successes could not obliterate David's late crimes; for though he might with impunity from human justice, think to indulge himself in the arms of Bathsheba, whom he had brought to his bed with the dishonour and blood of her husband; yet the all-seeing eye of the great Judge of the world rouses him out of his adulterous lethargy, and makes him unintentionally his own judge. This the Lord effected by his prophet Nathan, who proposed to David the following parable, demanding justice of him for a poor oppressed man. "There were, said Nathan, two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man abounded in all manner of plenty; but the poor man lived by



“ the mere providence of God, his whole stock consisting  
 “ of but one poor ewe-lamb, which he fondled as his  
 “ child. It happened, that the rich man being visited by  
 “ a friend, he sent and took away the poor man’s lamb,  
 “ and dressed it to entertain his guest.” David incensed  
 at the barbarity of the act, in a rage passes this sentence  
 on the offender. “ As the Lord liveth, the man that  
 “ hath done this thing deserves to die. And he shall  
 “ restore the lamb four-fold, because he did this thing,  
 “ and had no pity.” David, little conceiving that he had  
 pronounced sentence against himself, the Prophet plainly  
 said—“ Thou art the man? Hear then what the Lord hath  
 “ determined against thee: I anointed thee king over  
 “ Israel; I delivered thee from Saul, and gave thee his  
 “ kingdom, with all that thou couldest desire. Why then  
 “ hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, in  
 “ contriving the death of Uriah, and taking his wife? For  
 “ this thy crime, the sword shall not depart from thy  
 “ house so long as thou livest: and because thou hast  
 “ taken the wife of Uriah, behold I will cause an affliction  
 “ to rise against thee out of thine own house, and I will  
 “ suffer thy wives to be taken from thee before thine  
 “ eyes; I will even suffer them to be taken by thy do-  
 “ mestic, and he shall defile them before the face of the  
 “ sun. For though thou didst sin secretly, I will do this  
 “ before all Israel, in the most open manner.” David  
 attempted not to excuse himself, but made a short and  
 full confession, saying, I have sinned against the Lord.\*  
 Upon which, God was pleased to transfer the sentence of  
 death, which David had pronounced against himself, from  
 him to the child, the prophet telling him, “ That he should  
 “ not die, but that the child he should have by Bathsheba,  
 “ should not live.” Which accordingly took place; for  
 soon after the infant was born, it fell sick; and though  
 David wept and fasted to incline the Lord to mercy, it  
 died the seventh day. Which David hearing, he forbore  
 mourning, saying, “ Why should I afflict myself for the

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\* *I have sinned, &c.* It was on this occasion that David composed the 51st, Psalm; every line of which is expressive of the just sense he had of his crime.

“ death of the child ? I cannot bring him back again ; I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.” Then dressing himself, he went into the house of the Lord and worshipped : after which he returned to his palace, and refreshed himself, and conversing with his wife Bathsheba ; she conceived, and bare him another son, whom by the express\* command of God he named Solomon, (that is, Peaceable) because the Lord had promised that he should be a man of rest, and give peace to Israel.

God had before transferred the sentence of death from David to the child which was born of the adulterous commerce ; but the curse† of the sword was not yet completed in his family, which too soon fell out, to the great distress of David, and soon after of the whole kingdom of Israel.

David had many sons, yet but one daughter, that we read of, whose name was Tamar, sister to Absalom, his third son, whom he had by Maacha, the daughter of Talmi, king of Geshur. Tamar was a virgin of admirable beauty, with which Amnon,‡ David’s eldest son, was so captivated, that he pined away through a hopeless§ desire of obtaining her. This alteration in Amnon was soon discovered by his friends, but by none so fully as by Jonadab, his intimate friend, and cousin-german ;|| who being very solicitous to know the cause, Amnon plainly told him that he was in love with his sister Tamar. Jonadab, who was a man of intrigue, soon put the prince into a way to obtain his object ; for advising Amnon to feign himself ill, he knew that his father’s tenderness would induce him to visit him ; and then instructing him how to manage himself ; he advised him to request the favour of his sister Tamar to superintend his diet, and,

\* *Express.* See 1 Chron. xxii. 9.

† *Curse.* See 2 Sam. xii. 10, 11.

‡ *Amnon.* He was the king’s eldest son, whom he had by his wife Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess.

§ *Hopeless.* She being a virgin of the blood royal, was so carefully kept within the king’s house (as the manner of breeding the Jewish damsels was) that Amnon, though her brother, knew not how to come at her.

|| *German.* Jonadab was son of Shimeah, the brother of David.

to gratify his peevish appetite, that she might bring it to him. David, like a fond parent, indulges his son, and consents that Tamar should oblige him, not suspecting the fatal consequence. Innocent Tamar obeys, and came attended as became her state, with a collation, which she thought might tempt him to eat; but Amnon sullenly refused it, till the company was withdrawn; when taking the opportunity of their absence, he rudely seized her, and proceeded to indecencies. The poor affrighted princess expostulates with him on the folly and scandal of his wicked desire, in vain; the royal maid unhappily becomes a sacrifice to his lawless embraces. Having thus accomplished his base design, his furious passion turns to the opposite extreme of aversion, and he bids her quit his presence; in vain she argues with this brutish man on the baseness of this additional unkindness; he calls to his servants, and commands them to turn her out of his apartment.

Tamar afflicts herself with the most pungent sorrow, tearing her robes, and shewing all the expressions of the most extravagant grief. In which distracted condition she repairs to her brother Absalom, to whom she related the whole transaction. Absalom, though a prince of a haughty spirit, and impatient of wrong, was forced to conceal his resentment, and advised his injured sister to do the same; telling her, That considering Amnon was their elder brother, and heir apparent hitherto to the king, it was unlikely she should have justice done her on him, and therefore he advised her to bear it as patiently as she could, and tarry with him. She takes his advice, and Absalom, to prevent all suspicion of his entertaining malice against Amnon for this affront to his sister, never so much as mentioned it to him; but when the king heard of it he was exceedingly angry and displeased with Amnon for his cruel and wicked conduct, but we have no mention of any punishment inflicted on him for it.

Absalom's revenge had lain smothered in his breast two whole years, before it burst into a flame; which he executes upon the occasion of sheep-shearing; for that being a time of great mirth and jollity in those countries, he in-



vites his friends and relations to an entertainment, and to colour the matter the better, he pretends to be very pressing to have the king's company, who being unwilling to put him to so great an expence, declined his invitation. This answered Absalom's purpose, who observed to the king, that since he would not honour him with his presence, he hoped he should have his brother Amnon's company; to which David consented, and all the king's sons went with him to his country-seat at Hazor.

Absalom had prepared his servants to execute his bloody purpose, charging them, upon the signal he should give, to fall upon Amnon and dispatch him, assuring them of indemnity. Accordingly when Amnon was far advanced in wine, they fell upon him, and killed him: which occasioned such a consternation among the other princes, that they instantly fled from the house, lest they should share the same fate. But notwithstanding their hasty flight, the news of Amnon's murder had reached the court before their arrival there, and the king concluded that Absalom had murdered all his brothers; which threw him into the utmost agitation and despair: but Jonadab, to mitigate his sorrow, assured him, that only Amnon was slain, and that his death had been determined by Absalom from the time of the rape of Tamar. Shortly after, the princes arrived, who together with the king and the whole court bitterly wept and lamented the fate of Amnon.

Absalom, meanwhile, dreading his father's resentment of the murder, made a precipitate escape to his mother's father, Talmai, king of Geshur; where he lived a voluntary exile three years. In which time, David's grief for the death of Amnon abating, and his resentment against Absalom beginning to decline, paternal affection revived, and he felt an inclination to recal him. Which Joab perceiving, he promoted by a cunning artifice in this manner. He hired a certain woman to pretend herself a mourner for the death of one of her sons slain by another, and that she should go to the king, and complain that her relations demanded the surviving son to be delivered up to justice for the murder of his brother, by which she should be deprived of her only child, and thus



the name of her deceased husband would be extinct. The woman observed her instructions, and addressed herself so artfully to the king, that he gave her a fair hearing, and promised that he would take care of the business. But this declaration being too general, it would not answer her end; she therefore demanded protection of the king for her son against the prosecutors. Upon which he promised that no person should molest him. But the woman pressing for a pardon for her son, the king, to put an end to her importunity, said to her "As the Lord liveth, "there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth." The woman having now carried her point, frankly declared her design; and that, under this pretence, she had pleaded the cause of his own son, Absalom, whose absence the people lamented, and desired that he might be recalled from banishment.

The king thus over-reached, and suspecting Joab to have a hand in the contrivance, asked the woman whether it were not so? She honestly confessed the matter, and acknowledged that Joab had instructed her what to say. Upon which the king calling for Joab, told him that he had granted the pardon of Absalom, and ordered him to bring him home; but with this restriction, that he should retire to his own house and not come to court. This restraint was uneasy to Absalom's roving mind; therefore he sent for Joab, with a design to engage him to intercede with the king for his enlargement; but Joab not coming, after two messages, Absalom resolves by a trick to fetch him, ordering his servants to set fire to a field of barley belonging to him, which bordered upon his own. The servants obey, and Joab in a rage comes and expostulates with Absalom for so unkind and un-neighbourly an act, to one who had been so serviceable to him. Absalom replied, that it was because he could not otherwise procure an interview with him: and that his business with him was, to intercede with the king that he might be admitted into his presence. That if the king should think him worthy of death, let him use his pleasure, for he had rather die than live under this confinement. Joab once more undertakes Absalom's cause, and represents it to the king so success-

fully, that he obtains leave for him to come to court ; where, being introduced, he prostrates himself before the king his father, and is received with a kiss—a token of forgiveness and of royal favour.

Absalom thus restored, soon begins to make a base requital of his father's goodness, and takes every opportunity of ingratiating himself with the people ; to whose favour the advantages of birth and nature did not a little recommend him. For his elder brother Amnon being dead, he now seems to be the eldest\* son ; which being seconded by an incomparable form and beauty, and a familiar fawning address, he so insinuated himself into the good graces of the people, that they were ready to adore him. Absalom, perceiving their inclinations towards himself, takes care to lose no occasion of improving them : for he provided a far more magnificent equipage than usual, and instead of riding on a mule, as the king's sons were accustomed to do, he appeared in a chariot drawn by horses, with fifty footmen running before him ; and yet, with all this pomp of appearance, he would stoop to salute and oblige the meanest of the populace ; for he would watch every morning at the palace-gate, and offer to transact any man's business, and treat all with as much familiarity as if they had been his equals. Then, to make his father's government contemptible, he would, with a sigh, bemoan the neglect of his ministers ; and to insinuate what great things he would do, were he in power, he would add, " Were I a Judge, I would do every man justice."

By these dishonest artifices he robbed his father of the duty and affection of the people, and stole their hearts. And now, thinking his interest sufficiently strong, he unnaturally plots his father's ruin ; which he thus endeavours to accomplish. He begs leave of the king to go to Hebron, to pay a vow which he had vowed to the Lord, when he was in exile, " That if the Lord would bring him

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\* *Eldest.* Though Absalom was David's third son, in the order of his birth, Amnon by Ahinoam, and Chileah by Abigail, being elder than he, 2 Sam. iii. 2, 3, yet he now seems to be the eldest son ; Amnon being slain, and Chileah supposed to be dead before.

“back to Jerusalem, he would offer a peace-offering to “him.” The good king, not suspecting his son’s treachery, consented, and wished him a good\* journey.

The ambitious Absalom, having thus obtained his father’s consent, sets forward well attended to Hebron, for he had taken with him two hundred choice men, but acquainted them not with his design; and being arrived at Hebron, he gives birth to the conspiracy, sending his agents among all the tribes, to sound the inclinations of the chief men of Israel; and to direct all whom they could gain to his faction, to be ready at the sound of trumpet to acknowledge him king: and to secure to himself an able statesman, he invites Ahithophel, a crafty man, and one of David’s counsellors, to support his interest, who readily sided with the faction at Hebron.

David had early notice of this unnatural rebellion, and the general defection of his subjects to his ungracious son, and considering himself in great danger at Jerusalem, he marched from thence, attended with only six hundred men, leaving his concubines behind him to take care of his house. Among those faithful loyalists who followed the king, was honest Ittai the Gittite; whom the king could not prevail upon to leave him; for he, having fled to David for protection, was resolved to share the fortune of his protector in life or death. Ittai, therefore, with his family passing over the Brook Kidron, the king with his

\* *A good, &c.* This is said in the Text, 2 Sam. xv. 7, to be after forty years; but from whence to compute them is not plain. They who would date these forty years from the beginning of David’s reign, are much mistaken; for David, who reigned but forty years in all, reigned several years after this. Tremellius reads it *before*, instead of *after*, [*ante finem quadraginta annorum*; Before the end of forty years.] But, from better authority, (as in other places, so in this,) it seems probable that an error is crept into the text; which several learned men have thought should be rectified, and that the forty years here mentioned must be reduced to four years only, which are to be reckoned from the time of Absalom’s re-establishment in Jerusalem, or from his reconciliation with his father David, to the time in which he asked leave to go and pay his vow.

party followed, and they marched in a mournful condition towards the Wilderness. Zadok and Abiathar the priests, hearing that the king had resolved to leave Jerusalem, prepared to follow him, taking the Levites, and the Ark of the Covenant with them. But David advised them to return, and carry back the Ark with them; "For, said he "if the Lord intend me mercy, he will restore me; but "if he have otherwise determined, I submit." Besides, he told Zadok he might do him great service by continuing in the city, where his character would protect him from any violence that the usurper might offer, and that he might give him intelligence how matters went with the faction. Upon which, Zadok and Abiathar returned with the Ark, and David went forward by the ascent of Mount Olivet, at the top of which he made a halt, and there worshipped God.

While he was here, his old friend and counsellor Hushai, the Archite, came to him with all the tokens of sorrow, on seeing his royal master in distress, declaring he would share his fortune, whatever should happen. But David, willing to make the best advantage of so useful a man, advised him apparently to unite with the faction, that he might defeat the intrigue and cunning of Ahithophel, of whose abilities David being well apprised, he thought he had the greatest cause to expect danger from him. And to encourage Hushai to this undertaking, he tells him, that Zadok and Abiathar were entirely in his interest, and that by their two sons he might communicate any thing of moment to him. Hushai being always ready to serve the king, readily obeyed, and returned to Jerusalem before Absalom arrived there. But David went forward, and in his way was met by the perfidious Ziba, whom he had lately made steward to Mephibosheth, his friend Jonathan's son. Ziba, bringing a refreshment of bread, fruits, and wine, David asked him, where his master was, expecting that he, above all men, in point of gratitude, would have kept firm in his interest: But Ziba falsely told him that he was in Jerusalem, and hoped to be restored to his father's kingdom. The too credulous king, believing this treacherous sycophant, passed a hasty



sentence on the innocent Mephibosheth, giving Ziba all his estate.

After this, David marched to Bahurim, a city in the tribe of Benjamin, where he was very rudely accosted by an audacious rebel named Shimei,\* of the family of Saul, who walking on the side of a hill over against David, was heard to say, "Come out, come out, thou bloody man, thou man of Belial. The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, and hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of thy son Absalom, and thou art taken in thy mischief." Thus he went on cursing and railing, and threw dust and stones at the king. Abishai was so impatient at this insolence, that he desired leave of the king to take off his head: but David, conscious to himself of his own guilt in the case of Uriah, and of God's judgment denounced against him for it, saw and acknowledged the just hand of the Almighty in all this; and therefore would not permit Abishai to revenge him on Shimei.

Being fatigued, David and his company enter Bahurim, and refresh themselves. About which time Absalom, with his gang of rebels, came to Jerusalem; where Hushai presents himself to Absalom, and offers his service. Absalom, knowing Hushai to have been an intimate friend and counsellor to his father, banters him about deserting his friend; which Hushai cunningly enough excused, and answered so artfully to Absalom's questions, that he receives him as a faithful friend, and admits him into his council. And now Absalom, unwilling to lose a moment, calls a council, and asks what is most expedient to be done? Ahithophel, who held the highest place in Absalom's esteem, speaks first: and he, fearing a reconciliation between the father and the son, resolves to make the breach so wide between them, that there should be no room left for an accommodation, and therefore advised Absalom to

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\* *Shimei*. Whether this man had been a personal sufferer in the fall of Saul's family, or what else had exasperated him against David, doth not appear. But it seems, he had conceived some very great offence against David, and thought that now he might vent his malice with impunity.

lie with his father's concubines; alledging, that when all Israel should hear how much by that act he had incensed his father, they would despair of pardon, and stick the closer to him. The next thing Ahithophel advised was to take twelve thousand choice men, and pursue David that very night, and fall suddenly upon his guard, who must be exceedingly fatigued, and in no posture of defence, assuring him, that thus they might easily defeat them, and take the king.

Absalom approved both these proposals, the first of which he executed, but he would consult Hushai before he engaged in the latter; which, if they had done, must have been of fatal consequence to David: for Ahithophel was right in his conjecture. Hushai being called in, and hearing what had been proposed, to prevent all suspicion, did not condemn nor slight Ahithophel's last proposition, but thought it not expedient at this time; for, said he, "We all know David and his men are very brave, and at this time desperate; and if they should happen to defeat the party sent against them, it would be a very inauspicious beginning:" therefore it was his advice that they should arm the whole kingdom, and then they might fall upon him when they pleased, or drive him out. Absalom and the rest, except Ahithophel, were of Hushai's opinion: upon which, Ahithophel finding his advice slighted, and perhaps foreseeing by Absalom's feeble conduct, that matters were not likely to succeed, without any ceremony mounts his ass, and returns home, where having settled his household affairs, he soon after died of grief.\*

Hushai having thus wisely diverted the storm that

\* *Grief.* Some of the most learned Jewish Doctors affirm, that Ahithophel did not hang himself, but that he was stifled with grief: and it seems that the Septuagint did not think that the original word signified any thing else, since they translate it by the same word here, 2 Sam. xvii. 23, which St. Matt. xxvii. 5, makes use of in speaking of the death of Judas. Besides, all that Salmasius has collected from the Greek authors, to prove that the Greek word *απήλατο* signifies to hang, proves much rather to signify die of grief, as several learned men have shewn.

threatened David, dispatches away Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the two priests' sons, with an account of all that had passed: advising David to cross the river Jordan, not knowing but Absalom might change his mind, and revive Ahithophel's advice of pursuing him. The young men being discovered on the way by some of Absalom's party, hid themselves in a well till those who pursued them returned. Being come to the king they delivered their message, who followed the advice of his friends, and, at break of day, decamping, passed Jordan. Then marching to Mahanaim,\* he there made a stand, whither resorted to him Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai, with variety and plenty of provisions to refresh the king and his friends. But here they had not been long before Absalom, having raised a large army, passed the river with it in pursuit of his father, the command of which he gave to Amasa, the son of Ithra, who had married Joab's mother's sister.

David hearing that his rebel son had passed Jordan, and encamped so near, that it was impossible to avoid a battle, divided his army into three bodies, giving the command of the first to Joab, of the second to Abishai, and of the third to the faithful Gittite, Ittai, intending to go in person with them. But for their own sakes, as well as his, they dissuaded him; to which he consented, being willing to please the people at this time, and unwilling to engage in person against his son, for whom he still retained a paternal tenderness, as appears by the strict charge which he gave his three generals as they marched out of the city in the hearing of the soldiers, that for his sake they should treat Absalom well, if he fell into their hands.

The two armies being drawn out, they joined battle in the Wood of Ephraim,† belonging to the tribe of Ma-

\* *Mahanaim*. This was a city in the tribe of Gad, built in the place where Jacob was met by the Angels of God in his return from Laban, Gen. xxxii. 1, 2

† *Ephraim*. So called here, because, as some think, the Ephraimites drove their cattle over Jordan, to feed them in this wood. But others, with more probability, suppose it to be called the Wood of Ephraim, from the great slaughter which Jephthah had formerly made of the Ephraimites in that place. See Judg. xii

nasseh : where, though in all probability Absalom's army was far superior in number to that of David, yet the victory declared for the king, whose loyal troops killed of the rebels upon the spot, twenty thousand men : and doubtless more had fallen, had not Absalom been taken and slain. For he, to avoid his father's soldiers, riding under the boughs of a thick oak, his hair,\* being very thick and long, was so entangled among the boughs, that, his mule running from under him, he could not disengage himself, but hung there between heaven and earth. Joab being informed of this by a private soldier, blamed the man for not killing him, who excused himself upon the king's command, given in the hearing of the army. Joab, not regarding David's order, which he thought might be proper for a parent, but not for a king, and unwilling to lose time, took three darts in his hand, and going to the place where Absalom hung, he thrust them through him, and to make sure work, he commanded ten of his servants to smite him. Upon this, Joab, to prevent further effusion of blood, sounded a retreat, which gave Absalom's party an opportunity of returning to their homes. Then taking down Absalom's body, they threw it into a pit in the wood, and raised a great heap of stones upon him. Such was the end of this unnatural rebel, and graceless son of that most indulgent father.

Joab dispatches messengers with news of this victory to David, who sat between the two gates of the city Mahanaim, in doubtful expectation of the event of the battle. The centinel, who stood over the gate upon the wall, gave notice that he saw a single man, running. " If he be alone, † (says the king) he brings news." But as

\* *Hair.* His head of hair was of an incredible largeness; for when he polled, or cut his hair, (which he did that it might not grow too heavy for him) we read, 2 Sam. xiv. 26, that he weighed it at two hundred shekels of the king's weight, which of our weight is four pounds and two ounces.

† *Alone.* This was a token that the messenger brought good tidings, and that his party were employed in pursuit of the enemy; for if his party had been worsted, those that fled would have come in crowds to the city for refuge.



the messenger drew nearer, the centinel discovering who he was, gave notice that it was the faithful Ahimaaz. Upon which David concluded that he brought good news. As soon as Ahimaaz came within call, he cried out aloud "All is well." Then coming to the king, he paid his duty to him, and said, "Blessed be the Lord thy God, who hath delivered up the men that lifted their hand against my lord the king." The king, solicitous for his son, asked Ahimaaz whether the prince was safe. But he, unwilling to be the messenger of ill news, told him, That when Joab dispatched him and Cushy with the tidings, he observed a great tumult, but knew not the occasion of it. He had no sooner spoken than Cushy arrived, who related the whole account of the battle, and that Absalom was slain. Upon this the king withdrew to his apartment, and in a most pathetic and mournful exclamation\* thus vented his grief: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee: O Absalom, my son, my son!"

The king's excessive grief for Absalom turned the triumph of this victory into mourning among the soldiers, who came silently into the city, as if they had been beaten by the enemy, and fled. Joab, a man of more courage than compassion, observing this, and presuming upon his service, went boldly to the king, and in a manner more necessary than decent, roused him from his grief, and induced him, to the great satisfaction of his loyal subjects, to make his appearance among them, for they thronged about him, congratulating him upon the important occasion.

The rebels too, having lost their new made king, return to their duty, and strive who should be most forward to restore the king; only the tribe of Judah, which was the king's own family, seemed backward, or at least indifferent; which so affected David, that he sent to the two priests, Zadok and Abiathar, to remind them of their

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\* *Exclamation.* It is probable, that not only paternal affection moved David, but the sense of his son's rebellion, and of the quick judgment of God upon him for it, raised his passion to so high a pitch.

duty. And to soften Amasa, he gave orders to say to him, that he still considered him as his near relation, and that it was his intention to advance him to the post of Commander\* in Chief of his army in the room of Joab.

David, sincerely rejoicing in the return of the people's affection to him, carried himself so obligingly to all, that even the men of Judah melted, and unanimously petitioned the king to return with all his family, and came to Gilgal to meet and conduct him over Jordan. In this number came that insolent rebel Shimei, who before had cursed the king to his face, and threw himself at his feet, intreating pardon; which the king readily granted, giving him not only his royal word, but an oath to assure him of his life. Among those who came to congratulate the king upon his return, was the perfidious Ziba, attended with his fifteen sons and twenty servants, to wait upon David, and conduct him home. As for Mephibosheth, he tarried at Jerusalem, where he had continued mourning for the king's absence, and being lame, was obliged to wait there till the king returned; for Ziba had again imposed upon his innocent master, who had ordered him to saddle his ass, that he might go to meet the king, but he failed him. Upon which, Mephibosheth complained to David, when he asked him why he did not go with him when he left Jerusalem: but though he justified himself from the calumny of Ziba, and the king admitted of his excuse; yet he too credulously inclined to favour the false Ziba, making him a partner with his master in the whole estate. To which unjust sentence Mephibosheth cheerfully submitted, saying, "Let him take all, since I am so happy as to see my lord the king return in peace again to his palace."

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\* *Commander.* Though David concealed his resentment as well as he could, yet Joab had by many base actions lessened himself very much in David's esteem; as in the murder of Abner formerly in cool blood; his killing Absalom now, contrary to his express command, when it was in his power to have saved him; and in his late bold reproof, and rough treatment of the king.

Good old Barzillai, hearing that the king was on his return to Jerusalem, though loaded with years, would nevertheless come and pay his duty to him, and see him over Jordan. Then offering to take his leave of him, the king, in recompence of his former services, invited him to go with him to Jerusalem, and spend the rest of his days there; which Barzillai modestly declined, telling the king that he was now, by reason of his great age, past the pleasures of a court, and therefore desired that he might retire to his own estate, and spend the rest of his life in peace: but if his majesty pleased to bestow any favour on his son Chimham, it would be esteemed as a kindness conferred on himself. The king consents, and, kissing Barzillai, dismissed him.

At this time, a quarrel arose between the men of Israel and the men of Judah; the former thinking the latter had too great a share of the king's favour. This misunderstanding was soon improved by a seditious fellow, named Sheba, of the tribe of Benjamin, who from hence took occasion to proclaim, "We have no part in David, neither have we any inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel." Upon which, those malecontents of Israel deserted David, and followed Sheba: but the men of Judah persisted in their loyalty, and conducted the king to Jerusalem; where, calling for Amasa, he commanded him to get the army together in three days, and give him an account. But Amasa having exceeded the time, David, to prevent any miscarriage which his delay might occasion; ordered Abishai, with what men he could get together at so short a warning, to pursue after Sheba, and attack him, if he could, before he should get into any place of strength. Abishai takes his brother Joab, and the men under his command with him, and when they were come to the stone of Gibeon, Amasa with the army joined them, and took upon himself the command. This so provoked Joab, who was very malicious and revengeful, that he resolves to put an end to Amasa's\* command and life together, which he

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\* *Amasa's*. Joab, who was naturally of a proud and revengeful spirit, could not bear to see himself superseded in his command, especially by one who had



soon effected; for girding his sword over his armour very carelessly, but designedly, his sword dropped out of the scabbard. This he caused to happen as he was within sight of Amasa, whom he was going to meet, and keeping the sword drawn in his hand, he went on to salute Amasa with all apparent friendship; but as soon as he came within reach of him, he took him by the beard, and ran him through the body; upon which Amasa dropped down dead, his bowels issuing out of the wound. Joab left Amasa wallowing in his blood, and with Abishai, pursued Sheba, leaving a servant by Amasa's corpse to direct the people to follow him.

Sheba, in his flight, had gathered some small force, but not sufficient to oppose the king's arms; and finding himself pursued, he, with his army, retreated into Abel,\* where Joab besieged him; and battering the wall to make a breach, a woman of singular prudence and wisdom, fearing that Joab would carry the town by storm, called to the besiegers from the wall, and desired to speak with the general. Joab came within hearing, and the woman handsomely addressed herself to him, putting him in mind, That by a long prescription of time, it had been a custom, drawn from the law† of God, to offer peace when they came before a town; which he had neglected, and endeavoured to take the town by assault, though the people had never offended, but were peaceable and loyal sub-

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lately headed a rebellious army against the king, (though it is most likely his own revenge was the chief motive that put him upon this base act) which undoubtedly was the cause of this tragical end of Amasa. From hence therefore princes may learn how cautious they ought to be in removing their servants, and that nothing but merit should be the ground of their promotion. And from Amasa's fate, let rebels learn to shun the reward of their treason, for though David had forgiven and promoted him to the chief command of the army, yet he did it for a political reason, which did not in the eye of God discharge Amasa's guilt, who was doubly a rebel, and deserved his fate for flying in the face of his king and uncle.

\* *Abel.* A city in the tribe of Manasseh, called, for distinction sake, Abel-Bethmaachah, or the house of Maachah, from Maachah, the wife of Machir, the father of Gilead, 1 Chron. vii. 15.

† *Law.* See Deut. xx. 10.



jects to the king. Joab replied that he meant the people no harm; but that they harboured Sheba, a traitor to the king, whom he demanded; and if they would deliver him up, he would be gone. Upon this the inhabitants meeting together, agreed to cut off Sheba's head, and to cast it over the wall, which they did; and Joab, sounding a retreat, retired to Jerusalem.

These two rebellions being thus subdued, David reforms his court: Joab is again made Captain-general; Benaiah, Captain of the Guards; Adoram, Treasurer; Jehoshaphat, Recorder; Sheva, Secretary of State; Zadok and Abiathar, Priests; and Ira, a Jairite, was principal favourite of the king.

David had an army of three hundred thousand men, who did duty in rotation every month, and were relieved by the succeeding part, till it came to their turn again, which was once a year. This was in time of peace; but in time of war they were to be all in readiness to serve, as occasion should require.\*

While David was at war with the Philistines, the enemy's army encamping in the Valley of Rephaim, between David's camp and Bethlehem, and where the Philistines had a garrison; David being extremely thirsty, longed for water out of the well that was by the gate of Bethlehem, and said, "O that some one would give me of that water to drink." Three of David's chief captains hearing this, broke through the Philistines' camp, and drawing water out of the well of Bethlehem, they brought it to David, who, when he heard with what hazard it had been procured, would not drink it, but offered it to the Lord.

Towards the end of David's reign, the land was visited with a severe famine, which lasted three years. The long continuance of this calamity, gave David occasion to think that it did not proceed from any common cause, but from

\* *Require.* Of their order and course of serving, with the names of the principal commanders, see 1 Chron. xxvii, as likewise of the names of the heads of the tribes, principal captains, and most renowned warriors, with a brief account of some of their most memorable exploits in 2 Sam. xxiii. 1 Chron. xi.

the immediate hand of God. And therefore, enquiring of the Lord for what reason the land was visited with this plague? the Lord answered, "It is for the sin of Saul and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites."\*

David discovering the cause of the famine, soon finds a remedy; for immediately sending to the Gibeonites, to know what satisfaction they demanded of him, they sent him word, that they expected seven persons of the race of Saul to be delivered to them, that they might hang them before the Lord in Gibeah. David complied with their demand, and sent them Saul's two sons, which he had by Rizpah his concubine, and the five sons of Merab, † the elder daughter of Saul; and they hanged them up in Gibeah as they had proposed. Rizpah tarried by the bodies of her dead sons, to prevent their being torn

\* *Gibeonites.* 2 Sam, xxi. 1. These Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but the remains of the Amorites, who upon Joshua's taking possession of the promised land, imposed upon him and his counsellors, and cunningly drew the Israelites into a league with them, which they confirmed by oath, and by that means saved their lives. And though this league was fraudulently obtained, yet being sworn to before the Lord, it could not be violated. And therefore Joshua and the princes of Israel, though they otherwise punished the Gibeonites for deceiving them, yet they kept the league inviolably with them, and would not suffer the Israelites to touch them. Neither was this league violated during the administration of the Judges who succeeded Joshua, for above three hundred years, till Saul's time, who, it seems, in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah, slew the unoffending Gibeonites; though when, or where, this slaughter was committed, is not particularly recorded in Scripture. Nor was this a general slaughter. For David had recourse to some Gibeonites to offer them satisfaction, which shews that they remained a people. But Saul by killing some of them had broken the league, and violated the oath; for which divine vengeance was come upon Israel in a general calamity; for even kingdoms sometimes suffer for the transgression of kings; thus forty years after Manasseh was dead, Judah suffered under Nebuchadnezzar, for the sins of Manasseh. 2 Kings xxiv. 3.

† *Merab.* Michal is put in the text indeed, 2 Sam. xxi. 8, and not by mistake, as some conjecture: for Michal was not the wife of Adriel, but Merab; yet Michal brought up those children which Merab had by Adriel. And the Jews observe upon this occasion, that whoever brings up a pupil in his house, is in Scripture said to have begotten him.

or defaced by the birds and beasts. David receiving information of this ordered their bones, with those of Jonathan and Saul, to be brought away, and deposited in the tomb of Kish, the father of Saul, at Zelah, in the country of Benjamin. After which God sent them rain, which produced plenty, and intimated his acceptance of the measure which had been adopted.

Of all the enemies which disquieted Israel, the Philistines were the most restless and troublesome; and notwithstanding the many victories which the Israelites had gained over them, yet they still recruited, and invaded them again. And now, just upon the ceasing of the famine, David, who hoped to enjoy some quiet at the close of his reign, is attacked by the Philistines, and his people were obliged to fight four successive battles; in the first of which his life was exposed to the most imminent danger from the sword of a Philistine, whom Abishai slew just as he was going to run the king through. After which, David went no more into the army; and the other three battles were only remarkable for the killing of four men of Arapha of gigantic stature. Upon their death, the Philistines probably were discouraged or weakened, for there was no more war between the two nations during the rest of David's reign.

And now David being at leisure, in a thankful sense of God's gracious favour for the many deliverances he had bestowed on him, composed that excellent song of acknowledgment, thanksgiving, and praise, which we find in the eighteenth Psalm. But still as the mercies of the Lord increased towards Israel, they increased in impiety and ingratitude, and their king became the occasion of their punishment; who being moved\* by a vain curiosity

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\* *Moved.* Libertines and atheists, without regard to the error of the translators, take occasion from this text, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, to profane the Scriptures, and make God the immediate author of evil. Our translation says, that God moved David to number the people, though God in that very place tells him that his anger was kindled against Israel upon that account; and though the guilt of it could not be expiated but by the death of seventy thousand of the people, who died of

to ascertain the strength of the kingdom, commanded his generals to go through all the tribes, and number the people. Joab saw the snare, and endeavoured to dissuade the king; and in a more humble and modest manner than usual with him, argued how unnecessary a thing it was at that time, when all the people were entirely at his disposal, and ready to obey him. Joab in this was seconded by the rest of the commanders; but to no purpose; David was obstinately bent upon it, and would be obeyed.

Joab, and the rest of the officers of the army having spent above nine months in traversing the country, returned to Jerusalem, and brought a list of eight\* hundred thousand men of Israel fit to bear arms, and of five hundred thousand men of Judah. But this numbering cost David and his people dear; for no sooner was the account given in, but David was sensible of his error, which immediately brought him to an acknowledgment of his sin, and a deprecation of it: "I have sinned greatly, says he, in what I have done. Therefore I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly." But now, in whatever the

the pestilence on that occasion; and though it is expressly said, 1 Chron. xxi. 1. that it was the devil that moved David to that action. We must therefore translate 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, with Castalio, conformably to the original; "The anger of the Lord continued to burn against Israel," for David was moved to say, "Go and number the people."

\* *Eight*, &c. The account of this numbering of the people is differently related: for in 2 Sam. xxiv. 9, the sum given is eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword in Israel, and five hundred thousand in Judah. Whereas in 1 Chron. xxi. 5, the sum given in for Israel is eleven hundred thousand, and for Judah but four hundred threescore and ten thousand. So that this latter account has three hundred thousand more than the former in Israel, and thirty thousand less than the former in Judah. But it may be considered that Joab, through a dislike of the undertaking, gave over numbering, and left it unfinished, as appears from 1 Chron. xxvii. 24, which might occasion the different accounts brought in by some more fully, and by others more sparingly.



weight\* of David's sin lay, the punishment was left to his own choice; for God sent the prophet Gad to command him to chuse famine, pestilence, or war. The choice was a favour, but it was very difficult; which constrained David to say to the prophet, "I am in a great strait." But knowing the mercies of God to be many and great, he threw himself into the hands of the Lord, and chose the pestilence; which immediately invaded Israel, and in three days' time there died of the people seventy thousand. The destroying Angel having scattered the plague through the land, was about to smite Jerusalem with it; but David taking the blame wholly upon himself, prayed to the Lord rather to punish him and his family, than afflict the people further; upon which God commanded the Angel to desist. The Angel receiving this countermand, stood between the earth and heaven, near the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, and dispatched the prophet Gad to David, to command him to build an altar in Araunah's threshing floor. As David was going thither, Araunah came forth to meet him, and hearing his business, complimented him with the offer of the threshing-floor, and the utensils belonging to it, with the oxen† for the burnt-

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\* *Weight.* The nature of David's sin is not particularly expressed. But besides presumption in desiring to know, that he might glory in the number and strength of his people, and his doing it without any reason, but merely to gratify his own pleasure, he is supposed by some to have transgressed in not raising the Lord's tribute upon the people when they were numbered, according to an express law, Exod. xxx. 12, 13, where it was provided, That when the people were numbered they should every man, from twenty years old, pay half a sanctuary shekel, (which is, according to the value of our money, fifteen pence) as an atonement and ransom of their lives, that there might no plague come among them. Which money was to be appropriated to the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. But others are of opinion, that this tax was not to be raised upon every numbering of the people.

† *Oxen.* It may be enquired perhaps by some, what relation the oxen had to the threshing-floor. To which it may be answered, That the ancients used oxen for the treading or threshing out their grain; and sometimes with the oxen drew a wheel over the corn upon the floor, by which the corn was beaten out. The use of oxen for this work appears in the Mosaic law, which commanded that they

offering. But the king refused his kind offer, declaring he would not present an offering to God of that which cost him nothing. Therefore Araunah fixing the price, David gave him for the threshing-floor and the oxen fifty\* shekels of silver; and building an altar there, he offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and called upon the Lord, who answered him by fire from heaven upon the altar; and the plague ceased.

David now began to sink under the weight of years; and his natural heat being almost extinguished, it was resolved to supply that defect by artificial warmth. But that failing, his friends had recourse to another expedient, and procured a young virgin to sleep with him, thinking by that means to communicate a more natural heat to him than that of warm clothing. The name of the young person selected for this purpose was Abishag.

should not muzzle the ox when he trod out the corn, Deut. xxv. 4, which the apostle applies to another purpose, 1 Cor. ix. 9. And that they used to get out the corn by turning a wheel about upon it, the prophet Isaiah tell us, chap. xxviii. 27, 28, where he says, "The fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is the cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin;" implying that the cart-wheel was turned about upon the grain; which custom is thought by some to be alluded to in Prov. xx. 26, where the wise king is said to scatter the wicked by bringing the wheel over them. The threshing instruments also mentioned here by Araunah, comprehending the yokes of the oxen, and the wheels, with such other implements as were necessary to fasten the oxen to the wheels, would afford much more wood for the burnt-offerings than many flails could do.

\* *Fifty*. Interpreters find it very difficult to reconcile, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. where it is said, "That David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver," with that of 1 Chron. xxi. 25, where it is said, "David gave Araunah for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight." Some think that the threshing-floor and oxen only are meant by the author of the book of Samuel; but in that of the Chronicles we are to understand all the adjacent land and houses that belonged to Araunah. But this does not satisfy others, who are of opinion, that that which gave occasion to this contradiction in the versions was, that the translators did not consider that the Hebrew words which they have translated *silver* and *weight*, do also often signify money in general, and the value of any piece.

Adonijah, who was the king's eldest son, being by order of birth next to Absalom, thinks his father lives too long, and ambitiously aspires to the crown before his time. He was a prince of beautiful form, and admired by all; and so indulged by his father that he never contradicted him in any thing. These advantages, and his own natural popularity, urged him on to his own ruin, and the unhappiness of his father. His brother Absalom's fate might have been a warning to him: but ambition is blind and deaf to all admonition; for he imitates him in his equipages providing himself with chariots, horsemen, and a guard of fifty footmen, as Absalom had done. In order to the carrying on his ambitious design, he consults Joab and Abiathar, whom he gained to his interest, and who encouraged him in his rebellion, advising him to make a public entertainment, and to get as many to side with him as he could by that popular method. Accordingly he invited all the king's sons, except Solomon, and all the chief men of Judah, except Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, captain of the guards, and the officers of the army, who, with Zadok the other high-priest, were not in his interest. The design was, that when they had feasted well, and made the people merry, they should proclaim Adonijah king.

Nathan the prophet having notice of this conspiracy, acquainted Bathsheba with it, and advised her for her own security, and that of Solomon her son, to communicate it to the king, and to claim his promise of Solomon's succession to the crown, which he had given her upon oath. Bathsheba, thus instructed, went to the king, and having acquainted him with Adonijah's proceedings, desired him to nominate a successor according to his oath. While she was talking with the king, Nathan entered, and confirmed what she had said. Then David calling for Bathsheba, who had withdrawn upon Nathan's entrance, he declared Solomon his successor; and sending for Zadok and Benaiah, he commanded them all to place Solomon on the mule which he himself used to ride, and to conduct him to Gihon, where

Nathan and Zadok should anoint him king, and then to sound the trumpet and say, "God save king Solomon." Which done, they were to bring him back to sit on the throne, that he might reign over Israel and Judah. This was immediately executed, the people of Jerusalem approving of the choice by their loud shouts and acclamations of joy.

Adonijah and his party, having by this time finished their feasting at Enrogel, were just upon the point of proclaiming him king, when they were surprised with the sound of the trumpet, and the shouts of the people who attended Solomon. While Joab was considering what should be the meaning of this noise, Jonathan, the son of Abiathar, came in, and told them that David had made Solomon king, and that he had confirmed the succession to him in the presence of the court. This so startled Adonijah and his guests, that they rose up alarmed, and precipitately fled in various directions. Adonijah escaped to the altar for refuge, where he remained till he had an assurance from Solomon that he would not put him to death. Solomon, however, promised him his life, on condition, that if he ever attempted any thing against him in future, he should die. Upon this Adonijah quitted the altar, and was conducted to the king's presence, where bowing himself to Solomon in token of thankfulness for his life, and acknowledgment of his sovereignty, he was dismissed, and permitted to retire to his house without restraint.

David, now sensibly finding his strength decay, ordered all the princes of Israel, and officers of his court and army, to be assembled, whom he acquainted with his design of building a temple, and that he had provided materials for the work; but that God had forbidden him, and appointed Solomon, whom he had chosen king, to undertake and finish it. Then exhorting them all, and particularly his son, to serve God, he gave Solomon the model of the temple, with all the apartments and offices, as he had received it by the Spirit: likewise the courses of attendance of the priests



and Levites, and the manner of the vessels and utensils of service in the house of the Lord. Then he delivered to him, by weight, the gold and silver which he had been long collecting, and appropriated to this use, with particular directions how to apply it. And encouraging Solomon to go on cheerfully, he assured him that God would assist him in this great work, and that all the princes and people would be at his command: to whom, upon that account he addressed himself, wishing them to consider, that Solomon his son, whom the Lord had chosen to that work, was but young and tender, and the work was great; for the house which he was to build was not for man, but for God. Then informing them, that beside the materials of metal, wood, and stone, he had given of his own proper goods three\* thousand talents of gold, and seven† thousand talents of refined silver, he invited the people to a voluntary contribution; who very readily offered for the service of God five‡ thousand talents of gold, and ten§ thousand pieces, and ten|| thousand talents of silver, and eighteen thousand talents of brass, and one hundred thousand talents of iron, beside precious stones. All which they offered freely; which so highly gratified the pious heart of David, that in a holy rapture, he sung a hymn of praise and prayer to the Lord, before all the people. He then exhorted them to bless the Lord their God; which they did, bowing their heads, and worshipping the Lord, and then did reverence to the king.

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\* *Three*, &c. Which amount to thirteen millions five hundred thousand pounds.

† *Seven*, &c. Which amount to two millions, six hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds.

‡ *Five*, &c. Five thousand talents amount to two and twenty millions, and five hundred thousand pounds.

§ *Ten*, &c. That is, ten thousand drachmas, which, at fifteen shillings a piece, come to seven thousand five hundred pounds.

|| *Ten*. &c. Which amount to three millions, seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

The next day they offered a prodigious sacrifice to the Lord, consisting of a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, a thousand lambs, with their drink-offerings, feasting and making public rejoicings before the Lord: in the midst of which festivity they a second time proclaimed Solomon king, anointing him to be their governor, and Zadok to be chief-priest. Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord, as king,\* all Israel obeying him.

David, now finding his end approaching, called for his son Solomon, and gave him his dying charge, which was, in brief, to be steady in his duty to God; and descending to some particular affairs relating to the state, he obliged him to execute justice on Joab, who had treated† him ill, and treacherously murdered the two generals, Abner and Amasa, in cold blood. Then reflecting upon the impudent profaneness of Shimei in cursing him when he was on his way to Mahanaim, he charged him in his discretion to take vengeance‡ on him: but in grateful remembrance of good Barzillai's

\* *King.* That is, in conjunction with his father during the short remainder of his life; for it does not appear that David resigned his sceptre till he resigned his breath.

† *Treated him, &c.* Probably referring to his killing Absalom contrary to his express command, and speaking so boldly to him afterwards.

‡ *Vengeance.* This direction of David to his son Solomon concerning Shimei, may, to some, seem too severe, because he had before, upon Shimei's submission, granted him his life. But it will not prove so, if we consider that Shimei's offence was as much against God as against David; for God's law was express, Exod. xxii. 28, "Thou shalt not curse the Ruler of thy people." Now David was not only the ruler of the people, but God's anointed, a king of his immediate choice, whom he had raised up to fight his battles, and to execute his judgment upon Saul and his house for his disobedience. This Shimei knew; and therefore in railing at, and cursing David, calling him a bloody man, and that with particular respect to the blood of Saul's house, 2 Sam. xvi. 8, he blasphemed God, who had taken the kingdom from Saul, and given it to David. And although God was pleased to give David leave to shew his own condescension and clemency in forgiving

service, in furnishing him with provisions when he was in distress, he charged Solomon to be kind to his sons, and to let them eat at his table. Having finished his advice to his son, he prayed to God for him, in which prayer\* he made a kind of prophetic declaration of the greatness, prosperity, peace, and justice of Solomon's reign. Thus this great prince, having reigned forty years over Israel, seven in Hebron, and thirty-three in Jerusalem, died at the age of seventy years and a half, and was buried in that part of the city which he had taken from the Jebusites, and from him called the city of David.

David was certainly a character of peculiar eminence, though not without considerable blemishes. He was, upon the whole, "a man of God," "a man after God's own heart;" that is, eminently qualified to perform his will, and establish his worship, in opposition to his predecessor, Saul, who was as remarkable for his disobedience. (Acts vii. 46, xiii. 22.)

The Psalms of David will be an everlasting monument of his sublime poetical genius, considered even as human productions; while they are to be prized infinitely more as sacred Odes, divinely inspired, and descriptive of the Person, Glory and Kingdom of Christ, as well as admirable models of prayer and praise for the imitation of the Church of God in all ages. In these, David appears foremost in the rank of prophets, and must be considered, in that character, as a very

Shimei's personal offence against him, 2 Sam. xix. 23, yet he would not so pass by the sin against himself. And therefore he both stirred up David to commit the punishment to his son and successor Solomon, and gave him wisdom so to adjust the punishment, that Shimei might have escaped the severest part of it, if he had not brought it upon himself by a new transgression in breaking his oath afterwards.

\* *Prayer.* This prayer, in some respects, was predictive of the reign of Christ. It takes up the place of the seventy-second Psalm, and the concluding words of it speak it to be the last prayer or psalm that David made, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, &c.

eminent type of the Messiah, who is distinguished by the very same name.\*

As a king also, David bears a typical resemblance to Christ, to whom is given, "the throne of his father David."† To the possession of this throne, long before promised, the true David, like his predecessor, passed through many tribulations. As "the Leader and Commander of the people," as the victorious conqueror over all his enemies, in his zeal for the house of God, his earnest care for the regulation of sacred ordinances, and in many other particulars, the resemblance may be fairly traced; but, in all things, the Antitype must "have the pre-eminence;" for, in his character, there is no blot, and, "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."

Solomon,‡ upon the decease of his father, was immediately put into peaceable possession of the kingdom. But he had not been long seated on the throne before an unhappy occasion occurred, which determined him upon taking off his brother Adonijah; who, whether with a design to stir up new troubles, as was suspected, (for, as we have before seen, he had in his father's time aspired to the crown) or whether only captivated with the charms of Abishag, the beautiful Shunamite, his father's concubinary wife, he applied himself to Bathsheba, the queen-mother, to prevail with the king to give him Abishag to wife. The queen not perceiving the great impropriety of the proposal, promised him her best endeavours, and went directly to the king concerning it. Solomon being startled at such an unex-

\* Jerem. xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. Hosea, iii. 5. † Luke, i. 32.

‡ *Solomon.* Though Solomon was but a young man when he came to the crown, yet that he was married some time before, appears by the age of his son Rehoboam: for Rehoboam was forty-one years old, 2 Chron. xii. 13, when he began to reign, which was immediately after his father's death, who reigned but forty years, 1 Kings, xi. 42. So that Solomon had a son a year old when he began to reign.



pected request, and suspecting that Adonijah,\* Abiathar, and Joab, were engaged in a new conspiracy against him, resolves upon Adonijah's death, and sends Benaiah, the captain of his guards, to dispatch him. And to secure himself of the other two, he banished Abiathar into his own country, forbidding him to exercise the priestly function. Joab hearing this, was sensible of approaching vengeance, therefore hoping for protection from the holiness of the place, he took sanctuary in the tabernacle of the Lord at the foot of the altar, and refusing to come out at the king's command, Benaiah was ordered to kill him there.† Abiathar being removed from the office of high-priest, Zadok succeeded him, as Benaiah did Joab in the command of the army.

Shimei had reason to expect some severe punishment, considering these proceedings against the faction; and when Solomon sent for him, he might well conclude it was to receive sentence: but to his great surprise his doom was changed into a lenity beyond his desert; for he was only made prisoner at large in Jerusalem, for which, with great joy, he thanked the king, and retired to his house. Three years he kept within the bounds of his confinement, but at last he transgressed; for going after some of his slaves who had fled to Achish king of Gath, Solomon received notice of it, and upon his return put him to death.

The heads of the faction thus removed, Solomon considered himself safe, and assembling all his officers and the chiefs of Israel, he went with them to the high-place‡ that was at Gibeon, where he offered a thou-

\* *Adonijah.* See 1 Kings, ii. 22.

† *There.* Besides Joab's treason in siding with Adonijah, he was doubly guilty of murder in the premeditated assassinations of Abner and Amasa; for which it was lawful to take the murderer from God's altar, and slay him. Exod. xxi. 14.

‡ *Higb Place.* Though David had brought up the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem, where he had pitched a tent for it; yet the taber-

sand burnt-offerings on the brazen altar before the Lord; of which He was pleased to express his gracious approbation by appearing to Solomon in a dream by night, and allowing him to ask what he should give him; upon which, Solomon, having first recognized the blessings which God had bestowed on his father David, and with great humility depreciating his own ability to govern so great a nation, desired of God knowledge and wisdom to enable him to discharge the important trust. This request of Solomon so pleased the Lord, that, beside the wisdom for which he had asked, he promised that he should exceed all princes, before or after him, in royal state and magnificence; assuring him at the same time, that if he would observe his commands, he would, beside granting a vast accumulation of wealth and honour, bestow upon him the additional blessing of length of days to enjoy them. Solomon, awaking from his sleep, was satisfied that this dream, or vision, was from heaven; and, going to Jerusalem, he presented himself before the ark of the covenant, and offered peace-offerings before the Lord, and feasted all his servants.

It was not long before an opportunity occurred, in which Solomon displayed his eminent wisdom. Two women who dwelt by themselves in the same house, had each of them been delivered of a child, and one of them had over-laid her infant. She who found the dead child in her bed, accused the other woman with taking away her living child, and substituting the deceased in its place. The other confidently persisted in it, that the living child belonged to her. In order to discover the real mother, he commanded the infant to be cut in two, and one half to be given to each of the claimants. The mother of the living child hearing this, intreated the king to give it to the pretended mother, rather than kill it: but the other cried, "Let it be neither thine nor mine, but let

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nacle of the congregation of God, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the brazen altar that Bezalcel had made, remained still at Gibeon.

it be divided." Thus Solomon discovered the true mother; and ordered the living infant to be given to her whose tenderness and compassion sufficiently demonstrated her so to be. This wise determination gained him the reverence and respect of his subjects;\* and the reputation of his wisdom, was so widely diffused, that people came from all parts to consult him. But beside his admirable administration of justice, and the accurate and exact economy of his family, he gave other instances of his wisdom in his works; for he composed three thousand proverbs,† a thousand and five poems, and several treatises of natural philosophy.

Solomon had now begun to make alliances‡ with his neighbours, taking the king of Egypt's daughter to wife, whom he brought into the citadel, which David had built on the top of mount Sion, till he had erected not only his own house, but the house of the Lord, and the wall round the city; but afterwards he built a palace for his Queen. And now being at leisure, he remembered the charge, which his father had given him

\* History informs us of some singular instances of address, resembling, though in an inferior degree, this of Solomon.—Suetonius, in his life of Claudian, says, that the emperor discovered a woman to be the mother of a young man, whom she would not acknowledge as her son, by commanding her to be married to him; for the horror of committing incest obliged her to declare the truth.—Diodorus Siculus, also relates, that Ariopharnes, king of the Thracians, being appointed to arbitrate between three men, who all pretended to be sons of the king of the Cimmericians, discovered the true son and heir, by ordering each of them to shoot an arrow into the body of the deceased king, which one of them refusing to do, was deemed the true claimant.

† *Proverbs.* Most of these are supposed to have been lost in the captivity of Judah in Babylon.

‡ *Alliances.* Solomon had married an Ammonitish woman before he was king, who we may suppose was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, or else his father David would not have allowed it. So now, having made affinity with Vaphres, king of Egypt, he took his daughter to wife, who, it is likely, was a proselyte also, because it is said presently after, 1 Kings, iii. 3, "That Solomon loved the Lord, and walked in the statutes of David his father."

concerning the erection of the temple. Hiram, king of Tyre, his father's old friend, having at this time sent ambassadors to congratulate him on his accession to the crown, he returns his compliment in another embassy; and desiring that the ancient amity between the two crowns might be continued, he intreats him to furnish him with servants to fell timber, whom he would pay at a certain price. Hiram, rejoicing that so wise a prince as Solomon had succeeded his friend David, returns a very obliging answer,\* assuring him of all the assistance he could give, either in the per-

\* *Answer.* Josephus, in his Jewish Antiquities, gives us the letters which passed between Solomon and Hiram on this occasion, for the genuineness of which he appeals both to the Jewish and Tyrian records.

“ King Solomon to king Hiram, greeting :

“ Be it known unto thee, O king, that my father David had it a long-time in his mind and purpose to erect a temple to the Lord, but being perpetually in war, in his days, and under a necessity of clearing his hands of his enemies, and making them all his tributaries, before he could attend this great and holy work, he hath left it to me, in a time of peace, both to begin and finish it, according to the direction as well as prediction, of the Almighty. Blessed be his great name for the present tranquillity of my dominions! And, by his gracious assistance, I shall now dedicate the best improvements of this liberty and leisure to his honour and worship. Wherefore I make it my request, that you will permit some of your people to accompany some servants of mine to Mount Libanus, to assist them in cutting down materials towards this building (for the Sidonians understand it much better than we do;) and as for the workmen's reward, or wages, whatever you think reasonable, shall be punctually paid them.”

“ King Hiram to king Solomon.

“ Nothing could have been more welcome to me, than to understand, that the government of your blessed father, is, by God's providence, devolved into the hands of so excellent, so wise, and so virtuous a successor: His holy name be praised for it! That which you write for shall be done with all care and good will; for I will give orders to cut down, and export such quantities of the fairest cedars, and cypress-trees, as you shall have occasion for. My people shall bring them to the sea-side for you, and from thence ship them away to what port you please, where they may lie ready for your men to transport them to Jerusalem. It would be a great obligation, after all this, to allow us such a provision of corn in exchange, as may stand with your convenience, for that is the commodity which we islanders most want.”

*Jewish Antiq. l. 8, c. 2.*



formances of his subjects,\* or any production of his country. Having received this assurance, Solomon caused a muster to be made of all his workmen who were strangers, the number of whom amounted to two hundred and thirteen thousand and three hundred men: of these he appointed seventy thousand to bear burdens, a hundred and ten thousand to hew timber and stone, and the other three thousand three hundred to be overseers of the work. Beside these, he raised thirty thousand of his own people, whom he sent to Lebanon to labour with the king of Tyre's workmen.

And now, all things being in readiness, on the second day of the second month, in the fourth year of the reign of Solomon, the temple was begun on Mount Moriah;† and in his eleventh year, in the eighth month, it was finished in all its parts; so that it was seven years and six months in building.‡ And such care was taken in preparing the materials before they were brought thither, that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron, heard in it, while it was erecting. It was sixty cubits§ long, twenty broad, and

\* It is remarkable that HOMER gives to the people of Tyre and Sidon the character of Πολυτεχνους—*excellent artists in several kinds of work.*

*Bishop Patrick's Comment.*

† *Moriab.* The foundation of the temple was laid in this place, where the Lord had appeared to David, and in the very place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite; and where Abraham long before had been directed by God to offer up his son Isaac, Gen. xxii. 2.

‡ The temple itself was not a large building, but the numerous and extensive courts and offices around it, rendered the whole a prodigious pile: and if we consider the exquisite art with which the whole was executed, and that by a few artists, the dispatch with which it was effected was uncommonly great.

The building of Diana's temple at Ephesus employed all Asia for the space of two hundred years: and no less than 360,000 men were at work for twenty years together, in erecting one pyramid in Egypt. We are not to wonder then that seven years and a half were occupied in building Solomon's temple.

§ *Cubits.* The cubit consisted of three feet, English measure.

thirty high. The porch was twenty cubits in length, and ten in breadth, projecting from the front of the temple. He built about it on the outside three stories, with stairs to ascend to them. Beside the gate in front, there was one in the right-side. The roof was raised five cubits. All the timber work was of cedar. The walls were of square stone, lined with cedar from the top to the bottom.

The Sanctuary was separated from the rest of the temple by a cedar screen, adorned with carving, which stood twenty cubits from the end of the structure. The inside of the sanctuary was covered with plates of gold, in the midst of which stood the ark. Solomon had ordered two cherubims of olive-wood to be made, and covered with gold, ten cubits high, and their wings five cubits long: they stood upright, and stretched out their wings; one wing of each cherubim touched the wall, one on each side, and the other two met in the midst of the sanctuary, over the ark. There were two doors to go into the sanctuary. The porch was adorned with a brass pillar on each side, eighteen cubits high. In the court he made a large round brass bason, five cubits high, and of ten cubits diameter, which stood upon twelve oxen of brass, resting on ten bases, each of which had four wheels. This great bason was called a sea: besides which, there were ten lavers of brass four cubits high, each standing on ten bases. The same things were in the temple as had been in the tabernacle, the ark with the propitiatory, and the altar of frankincense in the sanctuary. The altar of sacrifices which Solomon made, was larger than the former, being twenty cubits long, twenty broad, and ten high. The table he made for the shew-bread was of gold; and instead of one candlestick, he made five of gold. The censers and all the vessels and instruments for sacrificing, were of gold; the kettles, cauldrons and basons of brass. All which work was made by a Tyrrian artist.

When the temple was finished, all the elders of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the heads of the families

of the children of Israel, assembled at Jerusalem to convey the ark of the covenant into the temple. The priests and Levites (whose peculiar charge it was) took up the ark, with all the holy vessels, and bringing them into the temple, disposed them in their respective places. Then they, with all the officers, singing an hymn, with their trumpets and other musical instruments, the cloud filled the house of the Lord. Which Solomon observing, took occasion from thence to infer, that the Lord had taken possession of the place. Then turning his face about, he prayed\* for, and blessed the people; after which, addressing himself to the whole assembly, he exhorted them to be sincere and stedfast in their duty to God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments.†

Having finished his prayer and blessing, he, and all the people with him, offered sacrifices before the Lord; upon which, the Divine acceptance of his prayer was shewn by fire from heaven, which consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices. The feast of the dedication of the temple was kept seven days successively; during which Solomon offered two and twenty thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. On this occasion Solomon appears in all his glory. The splendor of his retinue is far exceeded by the piety

\* *Prayed.* See this prayer in 2 Chron. vi.

† The temple was undoubtedly a distinguished type of Jesus Christ; the habitation of Deity; in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead-bodily." Our Lord himself justifies this opinion by saying, in reference to his own body, when present at the temple, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

The extreme magnificence of this edifice, and the wonderful ornaments with which it was enriched, rendered it a suitable emblem of Him who was adorned with every divine grace, and anointed with the Holy Spirit without measure.

Others say that the outward court denoted the visible church; the "holy place" was an emblem of the church invisible; and the holiest of all represented the church triumphant in glory. By baptism we enter into the first, by regeneration into the second, and by death into the third.

of his character; nor can we conceive of any thing upon earth more noble and majestic than the spectacle exhibited at the dedication of the temple. We cannot but revere the monarch who with so much zeal, stands forward in the presence of his nobles and his people, acknowledging the God of his fathers, and imploring, in a most admirable manner, his blessing upon himself, his country, and posterity. Happy is the land in which the wisdom, the wealth, and the piety of a prince, are thus united in the service of God and the encouragement of religion!

Solomon, having thus finished and dedicated the house of the Lord, erected a stately palace for himself and his queen, which was thirteen\* years in building; beside several other magnificent edifices, and stately cities, which he rebuilt and fortified. In all which undertakings the king of Tyre was very serviceable to him; supplying him with money, men and ships, to procure and convey materials from his own and other countries; in requital of which, Solomon gave him twenty cities in the land of Galilee; † which Hiram however restored, not from a principle of generosity, but because he thought them unworthy of his acceptance. These cities were afterwards colonized by Solomon.

The gracious promise ‡ which God had made him, that because he had not asked riches or honour, but only wisdom, that he might the better serve the Lord, and govern the people, he now found to be accomplished; for God gave him both wisdom, riches and

\* *Thirteen.* This was longer in building than the temple, because Solomon had all the materials to provide for building his own house, which his father had provided for the building of the temple.

† *Galilee.* This country bordering upon Tyre is reckoned by Tremellius and Junius not a part of the Holy Land; and for that reason perhaps is called Galilee of the Gentiles, Matt. iv. 15.

‡ *Promise.* See 1 Kings iii. 12, 13.



honour; in which he excelled all the kings of the earth: for as they all sought to him for instruction from his prudent administration, they came not empty-handed, paying him a yearly tribute of silver, gold, vestments, armour, spices, &c. And among the many royal persons whom the fame of his wisdom and grandeur drew to his court, the queen of Sheba\* was one of the most distinguished. Having heard much of his wisdom, she came with a magnificent retinue, and a superb present to the king, and had a conference with him, in which she proposed several enigmatical questions, all of which he resolved in so judicious a manner, that she was perfectly astonished at the profundity of his judgment. But when she had viewed the temple of Jehovah, and the king's palace, and considered the economy of his household, she was convinced that Fame had spoken truly; and breaking out into admiration and praise, she exclaimed, "Happy  
 " are those that attend thee, and continually hear thy wisdom: and blessed be the Lord thy God, who delight-  
 " eth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because  
 " the Lord loved Israel, to establish them for ever, there-  
 " fore did he make thee king over them, to do judgment  
 " and justice."

The queen of Sheba having thus gratified her curiosity in conversing with the wisest of kings, took her leave of Solomon, and returned laden with a royal present, and filled with admiration of his wisdom and grandeur. And indeed the magnificence of his court, particularly of his table, exceeded all the princes of the world before or since his time: for his daily provision was thirty measures† of fine flower, and sixty of meal,

\* *Sheba*. This country is supposed to have been some part of Arabia the Happy.

† *Measures*. They are called in our margin *Cors*. And the *Hebrew Cor* being computed by Godwin in his *Moses and Aaron*, l. 6, c. 9, p. 290, to contain five bushels and five gallons, the thirty cors of fine flour make a hundred and sixty eight bushels, and six gallons. According to which computation the sixty cors of meal must make three hundred and thirty-seven bushels, and four gallons. Both sorts, flour and meal, five hundred and six bushels, and two gallons.

ten stall-fed oxen, twenty oxen out of the pastures, an hundred sheep; besides harts, roebucks, fallow-deer, and fatted fowl. In his stables he had four thousand\* stalls for horses, chariots in proportion, and twelve thousand horsemen. And to these the great plenty of gold, which was so common, that silver was deemed of little value; for not only the vessels of his house were of gold, but he made two hundred large targets of gold, and as many small ones. He had an ivory throne, inlaid, or ornamented with gold, with six steps to ascend to it, and on the sides were the figures of twelve lions. In short, never was the reign of any prince more pacific, plentiful and happy, till he ungratefully neglected the laws of God, upon the performance of which, the promises of the Lord were conditionally founded. These he violated by giving way to his loose and ungovernable passion; for he not only abandoned himself to the wanton embraces of many women, but of strange women—such as were not Israelites by nature or profession, but strangers to the covenant, being of idolatrous nations, with whom the Lord had expressly prohibited† Israel in general, and their king in particular, from contracting marriage. And so extravagant was his attachment to pomp, that he had no less than seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, who soon seduced him to worship strange gods, as Ashtoreth‡ the goddess of the Sido-

\* *Four thousand.* Through a mistake which has crept into the original, by the negligence of transcribers, it is said, 1 Kings iv. 26, that Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for chariots: for Ezra, relating the same history, mentions only four thousand stalls: and supposing that Solomon had four horses to every chariot, (though chariots of war had commonly but two) every horse must at least have had three or four stalls; he having in all but a thousand and four hundred chariots, 1 Kings x. 26, and 2 Chron. i. 14. But this is altogether improbable, and contrary to the common custom, which does not allow several stalls for one horse.

† *Prohibited.* See Deut. xvii. 17.

‡ *Ashtoreth.* Commentators differ very much about the name and nation to which this goddess is appropriated. Ashtaroth is, no doubt, a Syrian word, and

nians, Moloch\* the god of the Ammonites, and Chemost† the god of the Moabites.

This apostacy and ingratitude of Solomon so provoked the Lord, that as a punishment for his sin, he declared‡ to him, that he would leave to his son but one tribe to govern; and to make him sensible of the danger of his disobedience, he raised up several enemies to disturb that peace which he enjoyed without interruption so long as he faithfully served the Lord. The first of these was Hadad, of the royal blood of Edom, who having fled from Joab when he ravaged the country, and put the male children to death, escaped to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married his sister, and

signifies sheep, particularly ewes, when their dugs are turgid, and give milk; and from the fecundity of those creatures which in Syria breed a long time, the Tyrians and Sidonians framed the notion of a deity, which they called *Astarte*; and must, without dispute, be the *Venus* of the Syrians; which Cicero in his third book *De Natura Deorum*, confirms; “the fourth goddess,” saith he, “is Venus, who was conceived at Tyre, and is called *Astarte*.”

“*Easter*, or *Aester*, was the Saxon goddess which they sacrificed unto in the month of April, whom the Britons worshipped by the name of *Adraste*, the same with the Phoenician *Astarte*, and the Sidonian *Ashtoreth*, 1 Kings xi. 5. *Ashtoreth*, the goddess of the Zidonians.”

*Gale's Court of the Gentiles*, p. 1, l. 1, c. 12, p. 85, b. 2, c. 2.

From hence probably is the name *Easter* derived, by which word our translators have strangely rendered *μῆα τοῦ πάσχα*, after the passover, Acts xii. 4.

\* *Moloch*. The word, both in the Hebrew and Æthiopick, signifies king, and he was the god of the Ammonites. This idol was a large statue made hollow, into which, some say, they put their children and burnt them; others, that they put their children into the arms of the statue, and then set fire to the combustible matter within it. But whatever was the manner of sacrificing children to this idol, it is certain that they offered children to him by fire, 2 Kings xxiii. 10. Jer. xxii. 35. Psal. cv. 37, 38.

† *Chemos*. From the resemblance of the Hebrew word *נְמוֹשׁ* *Chamos*, to the Greek *Comos*, this idol is supposed to be *Bacchus*.

‡ *Declared*. Probably by the prophet Ahijah, who is mentioned 1 Kings xi. 29. Thus we see how dangerous temptations, prosperity, and plenty are; but above all the excessive love of women, which, as a wise man says, is insuperable, when once we let loose the reins to our passion; for the valiant Samson, the holy David, and the wise Solomon, were captivated by them.

returning into his own country after the death of David, from whence he gave Israel great and frequent disturbances. Beside Hadad, God stirred up another enemy to Solomon in the person of Rezon the son of Eliadab; who flying from his lord, Hadadezer, king of Zobah, had gathered a great number of men, over whom he made himself captain, and seizing on Damascus, reigned there as king of Syria, and infested Israel all the time of Solomon's declining reign. But the most dangerous enemy of all was Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, a subject of Solomon, and whom for his great abilities, he had made ruler over the house of Joseph. Him God singled out to be a scourge to the house of Solomon by particular appointment; for sending the prophet Ahijah to him, they met in a field, where Ahijah told Jeroboam that God had appointed him to be the successor of Solomon over ten of the twelve tribes; but, in consideration of David's piety, he would not do this in Solomon's time. Then he assured Jeroboam, that if he would serve the Lord as he required, his family should be established in the government of Israel; but that he would reserve one entire tribe for David's sake.

Though this matter was concerted with so much privacy between the prophet and Jeroboam in the field, yet Solomon soon obtained notice of it, and concerted measures to take Jeroboam; but he made his escape to Shishak king of Egypt, where he remained till the death of Solomon, who having reigned forty\* years, died, and was buried in the city of David.

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\* *Forty.* For the rest of the acts and wisdom of Solomon, of which, no doubt, many and great instances must occur in the forty years reign of so great and wise a prince, we are, in 1 Kings xi. 43. referred to the *book of the Acts of Solomon*: a book undoubtedly lost, with other excellent pieces of his. And in 2 Chron. ix. 29, for a further account of the acts of Solomon, we are referred to the book of Nathan the prophet, to the prophecy of Ahijah, and to the visions of Iddo the Seer: none of which are now extant, at least under those titles. As to his age, notwithstanding the variety of opinions about it, it should seem that he was fifty-eight years old when he died, having succeeded to the crown at eighteen, and reigned forty years.



The defection of Solomon in his latter years is an affecting proof of human weakness and depravity. Well may we say, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom!" Who could have thought that the man, whose knowledge exceeded that of all other men, who began his reign with such exalted piety, who was honoured with such remarkable communications from heaven, and who was laid under such peculiar obligations by his unparalleled prosperity, should thus devote himself to sensual excesses, and form alliances with idolatrous women, in direct defiance of the law of God? That he should suffer the worship of idols in his dominions would seem strange, but that he should erect altars for them, and himself bow down at them is most marvellous! Yet, such was the conduct of the wisest of men; of him, who had the honour of erecting to Jehovah the most sumptuous structure that perhaps the earth ever bore!

Lord! What is man! Henceforth let no man trust in himself, nor in any other human being. Let us put no confidence in education, profession, or attainments, but learn the importance of that exhortation—"Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall!"

The Sacred History does not gratify us with a particular account of the close of Solomon's life. Every reader would wish to know how he finished his days, and whether his repentance was as exemplary as his apostacy. Perhaps a veil is drawn over this, lest any should be tempted to imitate his excesses, in confidence of equalling also his penitence.

Yet we are not without hope concerning his latter end. The book of Ecclesiastes, which is thought to have been written in his old age, is a Penitential Discourse on the Vanity of the World, in which he exposes the folly of his own pursuits, and points out to mankind—the *summum bonum*—the chief good, namely, "True Religion, or the Fear of God."

Immediately after the funeral of Solomon, Rehoboam, his son, went to Shechem, to which place he summoned all Israel to make him king. But the peo-

ple having laboured under some heavy taxes in his father's reign, demanded a redress of their grievances before they would consent to proclaim him king: and to enforce their address, they sent for Jeroboam out of Egypt, thinking hereby to awe Rehoboam into a compliance with their desire. But he was far from gratifying their wishes, putting them off for three days; during which, he consulted his father's counsellors, men of years and experience, who advised him by all means to comply with the people in their request; for it would certainly engage them to his interest for ever. The haughty prince cannot approve of this counsel, but demands the opinion of young and unexperienced men, more fit companions for his pleasures, than for the weighty emergencies of state. These young politicians advise him to despise the advice of his father's counsellors, and instead of redressing the grievances of his people, to increase their burdens. Finding no hope of the abatement of their taxes, ten of the tribes immediately revolted from Rehoboam; and when he sent Adoram, the collector of his tribute, to gather the revenue, they fell upon him, and stoned him to death. Rehoboam, sensible too late of his error, consults his own safety, and repairing to his chariot, hastens to Jerusalem. In the mean time those ten tribes, which had revolted from the house\* of David, inviting Jeroboam, created him king. And thus was that great and goodly kingdom, almost in its infancy, split into two unequal† parts, and thereby the foundation laid for the ruin of both.

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\* *House, &c.* The ten tribes that revolted were afterwards, in distinction from the house of David, called by the name of Israel.

† *Unequal.* This must be understood by a *Synecdoche*, the greater part on either side being taken for the whole: for some of the tribes, in drawing the lots of their possessions, being intermixed with others (as Manasseh had divers towns in Issachar and in Asher, Joshua xvii. 11, and Simeon's inheritance was within that of the tribe of Judah, Josh. xix. 1,) such of the Israelites as dwelt in the cities of Judah, continued their subjection to Rehoboam, 1 Kings xii. 17, and

Rehoboam, having returned to Jerusalem, began to think of revenging the affront offered to himself in the person of his collector Adoram, and expecting to reduce these rebels by force of arms, he collected an army of a hundred and eighty thousand soldiers; but when he was upon his march, the word of God came to Shemaiah, the man of God, to prevent a civil war, which was just ready to break out, assuring the people of Benjamin and Judah, that it was the sovereign will of God that the kingdom should be so divided, and, in his name, commanded them to return to their own homes; which message they obeyed, and every man went peaceably to his own house, instead of going to Jeroboam. After which, each king fortified his country as well as he could; but after a different manner. For Rehoboam, the first three years, served the Lord, as David and Solomon had done in the best of their time: but Jeroboam fearing lest the kingdom might again submit to the house of David, if his subjects went to offer their sacrifices at Jerusalem, as was prescribed\* by the law, forbade them to repair thither; and to prevent their forming an excuse from the want of worship nearer home, he immediately furnished them with gods, setting up two golden calves with altars belonging to them; and, for the greater accommodation, he placed one in Bethel, which was in the southern part of the country; and the other in Dan, which was in the

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perhaps some part of the tribe of Benjamin, bordering upon some of the other tribes that fell away to Jeroboam, might go along with their neighbours, and take him for their king. Which might give ground for that saying in 2 Kings xii. 20. "There was none (that is, no entire tribe) that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only; for otherwise we find all along, that Benjamin (that is, the main body of that tribe) adhered to the house of David in conjunction with the tribe of Judah, 2 Kings xii. 23, and in other places.

\* *Prescribed.* All the males of Israel were to appear before the Lord three times a year, in the place which he should choose; which was now at Jerusalem, the metropolis and royal seat of Rehoboam's kingdom.

northern part.\* He likewise built a temple, wherein he had altars for idolatry, and idol priests of the meanest of the people, and thrusting out the priests and Levites, not suffering them to execute their office to the Lord. Upon which they all retired to Jerusalem; and as many of other tribes, as had any regard for the worship of the God of Israel, followed them, which proved a considerable accession of strength to Rehoboam, and a diminution of that of Jeroboam.

The latter perceiving the decline of his interest, instituted a feast, on the fifteenth† day of the eighth month, at Bethel, where he appeared in person; and standing by his newly-erected altar, a man‡ of God,

\* Bethel and Dan, in which Jeroboam set up his golden calves, were at the two extremities of his kingdom. During his residence in Egypt, he had learned the idolatrous worship of that country, where *Osiris*, or the sun, was adored under the form of an ox or calf, called *Apis*,

Thus Milton :

Fanatic Egypt and her priests ———  
 Her wandering gods, disguis'd in brutish forms  
 Rather than human. Nor did Israel 'scape  
 Th' infection, when their borrow'd gold compos'd  
 The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king  
 Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,  
 Likening his Maker to the grazed ox,  
 JEHOVAH, who in one night, when he pass'd  
 From Egypt marching, equal'd with one stroke  
 Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.

*Par. Lost, b. 1.*

† *Fifteenth.* Whereas God had appointed the feast of tabernacles to begin on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, Lev. xxiii. 34. Jeroboam appointed his on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, probably with this design, that the people of Judah, their own feast being over a month before at Jerusalem, might have opportunity to attend his also, if their curiosity should incline them.

‡ *Man, &c.* Josephus, St. Jerome, and others, are of opinion that this man of God was Iddo, who wrote the Acts of Solomon, 2 Chron. ix. 29. But this is very unlikely; for, beside the variation of the name, which they mangle very much to make it like Iddo, the circumstance of time will not allow this prophet time enough to write the Acts of Solomon, by reason of his death so soon after by the lion. Beside, the Iddo, who wrote the Acts of Solomon, lived at least seventeen



who came from Judah, publicly foretold,\* that the same altar by which he then stood, should one day be destroyed by a child born of the house of David, Josiah by name; and added, as a proof of the truth of his prediction, that it should immediately be split. Jeroboam, incensed at this freedom of speech against his new religion and altar, stretched out his hand over the altar, and ordered his people to seize the prophet; for which profaneness his hand withered, and the altar split asunder. Jeroboam was instantly sensible of his impiety, and desired the prophet to pray to God to restore him his hand; which the prophet did, and he recovered the use of that member. Upon this, Jeroboam invited him to dine with him, and offered him a reward; both which he refused, urging the command of the Lord to the contrary; for he was forbidden to eat or drink in that country, and ordered to return another way. But, though he declined Jeroboam's invitation, yet his easy credulity betrayed him to his ruin; for an old prophet, being informed by his sons which way he had taken, saddled his ass, and overtaking him, invited him to return, assuring him that he had instructions so to do from God himself; and notwithstanding the man of God urged the commands of the Lord to the contrary, yet he at last prevailed with him, and went to his house and refreshed himself. After which, taking his leave, he went on his way; but he soon paid dear for his disobedience; for a lion met him and slew him, and afterwards stood by him, preying† neither upon him nor on his ass.

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years after Solomon; for it is said, 2 Chron. xiii. 22, that he wrote the Acts of Ahijah king of Judah.

\* *Foretold.* This was predicted three hundred and fifty years before it came to pass: the accomplishment of it is a strong proof of the Divine authority of the true religion in opposition to idolatry. See 2 Kings xxiii. 16.

† *Preying.* The lion's not eating the body, nor tearing the ass, was an argument, that this was not an accidental thing, and that the lion did not kill the man for hunger.

The report of this event was soon carried to the old prophet, who rode to the place, and brought the body back, and buried it in his own sepulchre.\*

Notwithstanding the visible judgment of God upon Jeroboam's hand, the rending of the altar, and the death† of the prophet, yet he obstinately persisted in his idolatry. Nor was his rival Rehoboam much behind him in iniquity; for after his three years' good reign, he degenerated so basely, that he and his people exceeded all that went before them, for they built them high places, images and groves on every hill, and under every tree; and, to add to all their wickedness, the abominable sin of Sodom crept in among them. Such crying transgressions‡ as these provoked the Lord to chastise them, which he did by Shishak king of Egypt, who, in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, invaded Judah and Benjamin with a vast army, consisting of twelve hundred chariots of war, sixty thousand horse, and an innumerable company of foot, composed of several nations. Shishak, having ravaged the country, and possessed the fortified towns, approached Jerusalem. Rehoboam and the people were filled with consternation; when the prophet Shemaiah, addressing himself to them in the name of the Lord, declared that this invasion was a judgment of God upon them for

\* *Sepulchre.* The death of the prophet for a single act of disobedience, strongly enforces the necessity of paying exact regard to the commands of God, even in the smallest particulars; and shews, at the same time, how much God is displeas'd even with the sins of his own people.

† *Death.* By the text in 1 Kings xiii. 33, where it is said, "After this thing Jeroboam turned not from his evil ways," it is plain that Jeroboam knew of the calamity that befel the man of God.

‡ *Transgressions.* The idolatrous worship of Venus, Bacchus, Priapus, &c. was frequently performed in obscure caves and groves, and accompanied with the most vile and filthy practices. It was probably the gratification of the most impure appetites that induced the Israelites at any time to fall in with their idolatrous neighbours. But the religion of the Bible is most holy.

their disobedience and apostacy, and that he would deliver them into the hand of the king of Egypt, to make them sensible of the difference between serving the Lord, and serving earthly princes. But upon their submission, the prophet, to comfort them, informed them, that God had remitted part of their punishment, and would not utterly destroy them, but that they should be tributaries to the king of Egypt. Shishak soon after entered Jerusalem, plundered the temple, and palace, of all their rich furniture and moveables, and carried off all that was valuable of the inhabitants. In this depredation they took away the golden shields which Solomon made, in the room of which Rehoboam substituted shields of brass.

While Rehoboam and his people were thus visited for their idolatry, Jeroboam also found his punishment in his sin, for God touched him in the most tender part. Young Ahijah his son, a hopeful prince, falling sick, his father, solicitous to know the event, sends his wife to the prophet Ahijah to consult with him, but ordered her to disguise herself, so that the prophet might not know who she or the child was.\* She obeys, and taking a present with her, went to the house of the prophet, who being by God admonished of her coming, was prepared to give her an answer. As soon as she approached Ahijah, he told her that he knew who she was, and the errand she came upon. Then he declared to her the heavy sentence God had denounced against her husband and his family, which should begin with the death of the child about whom she came to inquire, and terminate in their utter extirpation: and that the idolatry of her husband had brought this judgment upon them all. With this doleful message

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\* This application of Jeroboam to a prophet of Jehovah, seems to shew how little confidence he had in his idols; and his sending his wife on this errand was, probably, to keep the application a secret from his subjects. Yet, how infatuated must the king be, to suppose that the prophet who could foretel future events should be unable to detect the imposition.

Jeroboam's wife returned to Tirzah, which was then the royal city, and the moment she entered the palace, the child expired.

Rehoboam reigned in Judah twelve years after the plundering and subjecting of Jerusalem by Shishak, and died in the seventeenth year of his reign, and fifty-eighth of his age, leaving his beloved son Abiam\* his successor; who began his reign in Judah in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam king of Israel. Abiam was an active prince, and of a martial spirit; and resolving to end the long dispute between the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, he raised an army of four hundred thousand men. Jeroboam, whose dominions were of a larger extent, intending to overpower Abiam with numbers, raised an army of eight hundred thousand men; whom Abiam resolves to engage, notwithstanding the great inequality of two to one. Just before the battle, Abiam, in a long oration,† expostulated with the Israelitish army on the injustice of their cause, in revolting from his father Rehoboam. While he was thus engaged, Jeroboam, to obtain a complete and easy victory, surrounded him and his army; which when the men of Judah saw, they addressed themselves in prayer to the Lord for success, and the priests sounding the trumpets, and the soldiers giving a great shout, they charged the Israelites so bravely, that they soon obliged them to give way, and in the whole action put five hundred thousand of them to the sword.‡

\* *Abiam.* So he is called, 1 Kings xv. 1, but in 2 Chron. xiii. he is called Abijah.

† *Oration.* See 2 Chron. xiii. 5. This is justly considered as a fine piece of eloquence; but it seems to have made no impression on Jeroboam or the people. Truth was not their object, but victory.

‡ *Sword.* This was a remarkable victory, and must be ascribed to the God of Judah, to whom they cried, and in whom they trusted. The text says, "God smote Jeroboam," and "God delivered them into their hand;" and, "the children of Judah prevailed because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers." 2 Chron. xiii. 13, &c.



Abiam improves his victory, and pursues Jeroboam, from whom he took many considerable places of strength,\* which so weakened Jeroboam, that he was never afterwards able to oppose him. Abiam by this and other successful achievements grew very great and powerful; but his reign was short, for he died in less than three years after his accession to the throne.

Abiam is succeeded by his son Asa, a prince of great piety and virtue, who came peaceably to the crown, and reigning for the first ten years in peace, he reformed many abuses of the former reigns, expelling the sodomites, breaking down idols; destroying the high places,† and demolishing their altars in all the cities of Judah. He then restored the sacred vessels of gold and silver to the temple, and compelled Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to keep his law. In this time of peace, Asa built many cities, and fortified others, for the security and strength of his kingdom; but after these ten peaceable years, Zera, king of Ethiopia, threatens Judah with an army of ten hundred thousand men, and a great number of armed chariots. Asa was not unprovided; for he immediately raised five hundred and eighty thousand men to oppose him; but seeing himself so overmatched by the enemy, he applied to the Lord for succour, in an humble confidence, saying, “ Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with  
“ many, or with them that have no power. Help us,

\* *Strength.* Among the conquered cities was Bethel, where one of the golden calves was placed; but we do not find that Abiam destroyed it, as he ought to have done; for “ his heart was not perfect with God,” nor did he improve his victories for the honour of Jehovah.

† *Places.* There were two sorts of high places. One was used for idolatrous purposes; these Asa removed. Others, where the true God was worshipped, were deemed venerable on some religious account, and, though unlawful, were winked at by many good kings, who had not courage to encounter the popular opinion in their favour; but Hezekiah afterwards made a thorough reformation, and totally removed them.

“ O Lord our God, for we rely on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God, let not man prevail against thee.” So acceptable was this short, but hearty prayer of king Asa, that he routed the Ethiopians, pursuing them to Gerar where he gave them a total overthrow, and plundered the country round about Gerar ; after which he returned to Jerusalem with the spoil of the enemy.

Upon Asa's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, God, to encourage him to persevere in his duty, sends Azariah the prophet to admonish him of the necessity of continuing in his service, and to assure him of his care and protection, so long as he served him, but no longer. Upon which Asa made a thorough reformation, not only demolishing the idols which still remained in Judah and Benjamin, but in the conquered countries ; and repairing the altar before the porch of the temple, he summoned not only the natives, but all the strangers that were among them, to join in devotion with him ; where they offered of the spoil that they had taken seven hundred oxen, and seven thousand sheep ; engaging in a covenant at the same time, that whosoever should forsake the true worship of the Lord should be put to death. This they confirmed by oath, which God accepted, and gave them rest.

While affairs were going on thus successfully in Judah, considerable changes happened among the Israelites : for Jeroboam did not long survive the defeat which Abiam gave him, but died in the first or second year of Asa's reign, leaving his son Nadab, who succeeded him in his kingdom, and, unhappily, in his sins. He had scarcely completed two years of his reign, when he was slain by Baasha at the siege of Gibbethon, a town belonging to the tribe of Dan, but then in possession of the Philistines. Baasha, thus possessed of the throne of Israel, to secure himself therein, determined to extirpate Jeroboam's family, which he soon effected, not leaving one alive, as the prophet Abijah had foretold to Jeroboam's wife. But though Jero-

boam's idolatry was the cause of his ruin, yet Baasha imitates him therein; and, to prevent a total defection of his subjects, who from all quarters of Israel revolt to Asa, upon the reformation which he had begun in Judah, he went with an armed force and built Ramah, and fortified it, keeping a powerful garrison in it, to prevent the Israelites from removing to Judah.

Asa having hitherto obeyed the Lord, and effected a thorough reformation in his kingdom, at last makes a false and fatal step; for not thinking himself sufficiently strong to encounter Baasha, instead of applying to God, as he had done in his former distresses, he sacrilegiously takes all the silver and gold that was in the temple, and in his own exchequer, and sends it as a present to Benhadad king of Syria, requesting his assistance against Baasha. Benhadad, tempted with so rich a present, immediately attacks several cities of Israel with such success, that Baasha was obliged to relinquish his new design of fortifying his frontiers towards Judah, to defend other parts of his kingdom; of which Asa taking advantage, marches to Ramah, which he demolishes, and with the materials of it builds two cities in his own dominions, called Geba and Mizpah. But while he was thus employed in securing himself by his own politics, without due regard to the providence of God, which had hitherto supported him, the Lord sent Hanani the prophet to him, who reminding him of the many and great deliverances which he had received from the mercy of God, and reproaching him with his diffidence in applying to the king of Syria, instead of God, he informs him, that the rest of his reign shall be spent in war. Asa, who had hitherto been attended with a constant series of success, could not endure this reproof; and, to be revenged of the prophet, he put him in prison.

About the same time, Jehu, the son of this Hanani the prophet, was sent by the Lord to Baasha, upon the same errand, but with a severer doom. For after having reproached him with the sin of idolatry, and of

following the steps of Jeroboam, he told him that the Lord would cut off him and his posterity.\*

Baasha† dying in the twenty-sixth year of king Asa, his son Elah succeeded him; who, being an impious and sensual prince, was, in the second year of his reign, assassinated, while he was carousing in his steward's house, by Zimri, captain of part of his cavalry;

\* *Posterity.* One branch of the threatening denounced against Baasha was, that "God would make his house like the house of Jeroboam," 1 Kings xvi. 3, which was exactly fulfilled; for as Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, reigned but two years, so Elah, the son of Baasha, reigned no more: and as Nadab was killed by the sword, so was Elah; so remarkable was the similarity between them in their lives and in their deaths. Those who resemble others in their sins, may expect to resemble them in their plagues.

† *Baasha.* Here the series of history grows intricate; and the greatest commentators have been unable to reconcile the difficulty. Scaliger follows the series of the kings of Judah according to the time mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, without any regard to the comparison of it with the reigns of the kings of Israel. It is probable that Baasha did not live long after Jehu the prophet had denounced the judgment against him. He is said to have slept with his fathers, and Elah his son to have succeeded him in the twenty-sixth of Asa king of Judah, 1 Kings xvi. 6 and 8. Yet Baasha's expedition against Asa, in order to build Ramah, is said to be in the thirty-sixth of the reign of Asa, 2 Chron. xvi. 1. Junius and Tremellius, to reconcile this difference, would have that thirty-sixth year to relate, not to Asa's reign, but to the date of the kingdom of Judah, from the division of the kingdom of Israel, at Rehoboam's coming to the crown, and to be but the fourteenth year of the reign of Asa. But that cannot be, since this expedition of Baasha, for the building of Ramah, was some time after Asa had defeated the king of Ethiopia; for the prophet Hanani reproached Asa for forgetting the deliverance God had given him from that king, when he desired help of Benhadad king of Syria against Baasha. And yet the defeat of the Ethiopians, or at least the covenant for reformation, which Judah thereupon entered into, is expressly placed in the third month of the fifteenth year of king Asa's reign. So that that thirty-sixth year, in which Baasha is said to go up to build Ramah (and which seems to have been a good while after the reformation-covenant, made in Asa's fifteenth year) can by no good computation be made to be the fourteenth year of Asa's reign. In short, the occasion of this difference must proceed from the mistake of some transcriber, which alone can reconcile it, as is the case in many other places.



who usurped the kingdom, and extirpated Baasha's family, not sparing any of his kindred or friends. At this time the army was encamped before Gibbethon, which was in the possession of the Philistines; and the news of Zimri's conspiracy and Elah's death being brought to the camp, the army proclaimed Omri their general, king; who raising the siege of Gibbethon, marched directly to Tirzah, the royal city, and there besieged Zimri; who, not able to defend the place, and despairing of succour, retired to the palace, and burnt both it and himself.

Zimri having thus put an end to his short reign (which lasted but seven days,) the people of Israel were divided, some following Tibni the son of Ginath to make him king, and others adhering to Omri,\* who in time prevailed, and reigned; but in wickedness he exceeded all his predecessors, making laws to bind the people to imitate him, which were afterwards called Omri's statutes.† There is nothing memorable of him, beside his purchasing the hill Samaria, of Shemer, for two talents of silver, on which hill he built the city, which from Shemer he called Samaria, and which was afterwards the metropolis of the Israelitish kingdom.

Ahab succeeded his father Omri in the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah. He reigned twenty-two years over Israel in Samaria, and far exceeded all his predecessors in wickedness. For he not only walked in the sins of Jeroboam; but, to aggravate his crimes, married Jezebel the daughter of Eth-baal king of Zidon; by which he introduced all manner of idolatry among

\* *Omri*. He is said to have begun his reign over Israel in the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, and to have reigned twelve years; and his son Ahab to have succeeded him in the thirty-eighth year of Asa; which must be incorrect, unless Omri's twelve years be computed from Elah's death, and take in the time, wherein Tibni and Omri were competitors for the crown, which is supposed to have been four years. This mode of reckoning will come near the point.

† *Statutes*. See Micah vi. 16.

the Israelites; building a temple for Baal in Samaria, and, erecting an altar there, he served Baal and worshipped him, and made a grove for idols.\* These abominations provoked the Lord to send Elijah† the Tishbite to him, to denounce a judgment against Israel; telling him, that for three‡ successive years there should be neither rain nor dew upon his country. Elijah having delivered his message, retires, by the direction of God, to the brook Cherith, which falls into the Jordan; where he was fed morning and evening with bread and flesh by ravens; but after awhile, the brook drying for want of rain, he received the command of God to remove to the house of a widow woman at Sarepta, a town belonging to the Zidonians: where he

\* *Idols.* The sacred historian says, "There was none like unto Ahab, who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord." His zeal for idolatry, seems to have been inflamed by his marriage with the daughter of an idolatrous prince. Jezebel herself was a woman of a fierce, abandoned, and persecuting spirit. How careful should young persons be, in forming a connexion for life, lest a wife, instead of proving a help in every thing virtuous and good, should become a tempter and a seducer. How many have given up their principles to please a husband or a wife—more concerned for domestic peace, than for peace with God.

† Elijah, one of the greatest of all the prophets, is introduced without any previous account of his extraction: he is called the *Tishbite*, from his having been born, or having lived, at *Tisbe*, a town in Gilead. But we have no account of his call to the prophetic office. Hence various conjectures have been formed, but they are not worth notice, and are devoid of all authority. Certain it is, that he was a most extraordinary person, endowed with a bold and undaunted spirit, and well qualified to maintain the honor of Jehovah, at a time when every effort was made to establish the worship of idols. He bore a noble testimony against the prevailing sin of the day, and approved himself to his God, but we do not find that his faithful ministry effected any remarkable change in the nation. The pious, however, were doubtless established in their faith, and the rest were left without excuse.

‡ *Three.* &c. That is, three years and six months; for so, both our Saviour in St. Luke iv. 25, and the apostle St. James, v. 17, reckon the time.

was no sooner come, than he met the widow at the entrance of the place gathering sticks, of whom he requested a little water, which she readily went to procure; but as she was going, he desired her to bring him also a morsel of bread. The widow replied, that she had but a small quantity of flour, and a little oil, and was come out of the town to gather some sticks, to bake that flour, that she and her son might eat their last meal. Elijah bade her not fear, but make him a little cake, and bake it on the embers, and afterwards make for herself and son, assuring her that the flour and oil should not fail, till God should send rain upon the earth. The poor woman hesitated not to do as he directed her; and she and her family lived upon this little store many days. During Elijah's stay at this woman's house, her son fell sick and died, whom the prophet miraculously restored to life; which convinced the woman that he was a prophet of the Lord.

The drought continuing, as Elijah had predicted, a dreadful famine ensued. The third year, the Lord commanded Elijah to appear before Ahab, assuring him that he would send rain; whereupon Elijah set forward. At this time Ahab, and his steward Obadiah, (who was a man that feared the Lord, and shewed his piety in saving a hundred prophets, whom Jezebel would have murdered) dividing the land between them, went two several ways to seek for grass, to preserve the mules and horses. Providence so ordered it, that Obadiah met Elijah, and knowing him, did him reverence, and with joy said, "Art thou my Lord Elijah?" He replied, "I am: now therefore go tell thy lord, that Elijah is here." Obadiah having regard to Elijah's safety, and unwilling to deliver him up to Ahab, who had caused search to be made for him; and besides, being afraid, that when he should have given an account of him, he might remove, and that then, the king being enraged that he could not find the prophet, might put him to death, would have excused himself from going; but when Elijah assured him that he would certainly appear before Ahab that very day, he went and in-

formed him. The king immediately came forth to meet Elijah, when, instead of saluting him, he upbraided him with troubling Israel. Elijah answered, that it was not he who had troubled Israel, but that Ahab and his family had done so ; and that they suffered solely on account of having forsaken the Lord to follow Baal. “ Now, therefore, says he, to make it appear who hath troubled Israel, assemble the people at mount Carmel, and bring thither the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of the groves, whom Jezebel feeds at her table.” When they were all assembled, Elijah proposed to Baal’s priests to have two bullocks brought, that they should lay one of them upon wood, without putting any fire under it ; and that he would do the same by the other ; that they should then call upon their gods, and he would call upon the name of Jehovah ; and that the Deity who should make it appear that he had heard their prayers, by consuming the sacrifice with fire, should be acknowledged as the true God. To this equitable proposal they readily agreed, and Baal’s priests called upon their god till noon, but to no purpose. Then Elijah, filled with a holy indignation, began to mock them, saying, “ Cry aloud : for, either he is talking, or he sleepeth, and must be awaked.” Their disappointed importunity urged them to cry aloud, and even to cut\* themselves with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out.

Elijah, having allowed them sufficient time, invited the people to draw near him, and taking twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes, he repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been broken down ; he then laid the bullock on the wood, and poured water

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\* *Cut, &c.* This was the ancient custom of the heathen ; by which they expressed extreme sorrow, and which God had positively forbidden his people to imitate, Levit. xix. 28, and Deut. xiv. 1.



on the sacrifice, the wood and the altar, three successive times, to prove that there was no collusion by concealing any fire, and to render the expected miracle more conspicuous and incontestable. All things being thus disposed, and the time of offering the evening sacrifice being come, Elijah drew near to the altar, and said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, shew this day, that thou art the God of Israel, that I am thy servant, and that it is by thy command that I have done this thing. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that these people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that their hearts may be converted from their idols unto thee." He had no sooner done speaking; than the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed not only the burnt-offering, but the wood and stones, the very dust, and the water in the trench about the altar. The people seeing this miracle, in admiration and acknowledgment of it, fell on their faces, and owned, that the God of Elijah was the true God. Upon this Elijah directed them to secure the priests of Baal, and ordering them to be brought to the brook Kishon, caused them all to be put to death.

Elijah, having thus convinced the people of the omnipotence of Jehovah, and executed the priests of Baal, advised Ahab to eat and drink without fear of wasting his provisions, assuring him that there was abundance of rain at hand. Then ascending mount Carmel, he ordered his servant to go and look towards the sea; the servant obeyed, and repeated it seven times; after which, he brought him back word, that he saw a very little cloud rise out of the sea, like a man's hand. Upon which he bid him go to Ahab, and advise him to prepare his chariot, and to hasten home, lest he should be prevented by the rain. Ahab perceiving the sky over-cast, makes the best of his way to Jezreel; and Elijah having girded his vest about him, ran before Ahab; who immediately related to Jezebel his queen, all that Elijah had done, and particularly how he had occasioned the death of the prophets. This so enraged Jezebel, that she protested by her gods, that Elijah

should not survive them longer than the next day. On hearing this, he thought proper immediately to withdraw himself from the dominions of Ahab, to Beersheba in Judah; where leaving his servant, he went two days journey into the wilderness, and being weary, he sat down at the foot of a juniper-tree, and wishing to die, fell asleep. He had not long slept, when an angel awaked him, bidding him rise and eat. On which, he found a cake of bread, and a pot of water; and having eaten and drank, he laid himself down to sleep again: but the angel soon awaked him, and bade him eat once more, as he had a long journey to take. He did so, and went, through the strength of that meat, forty\* days and forty nights, to Horeb the mount of God. There it was the Lord appeared to him, and having by several emblems of the wind rending the rocks, the earthquake and the fire, made him sensible of his power, he dismissed him to go and anoint Hazael king of Syria, Jehu king of Israel, and Elisha to be prophet in his own room; assuring him that he had reserved to himself seven thousand men in Israel, who had never paid adoration to Baal.

Elijah on his way met Elisha at plough; and as he passed by him, he threw his mantle† upon him. Elisha, who knew the meaning of this, followed Elijah, and desired that he might take his leave of his parents. But Elijah giving him a short answer, said, "Go, re-  
turn, knowest thou what I have done to thee?" Thereupon Elisha turning back from him in haste, slew two of the oxen and dressed them, and distributing

\* *Forty.* Not that it was forty days' journey from Beersheba to mount Horeb (it being not above four or five days) but Elisha must, through fear of being apprehended by Jezebel, who had vowed his death, wander out of the way; and so make it forty days before he arrived at Horeb.

† *Mantle.* This was the ceremony, by which Elisha was instituted the companion and successor of Elijah. Which ceremony was in use long before, and after, in other cases; as in that of Boaz when he took Ruth, chap. iii. ver. 9. "Spread thy vest or mantle over thy servant;" and in that of Ezekiel xvi. 8, "I spread my skirt over thee."

them among the people, took his leave, and followed Elijah.

Affairs proceeding thus in Israel, Asa, king of Judah, having reigned thirty-nine years, was very much disordered both in mind and body. He had discontinued to apply to the Lord, as he used to do in distress; and being greatly afflicted with a disease in his feet (probably the gout) he neglected to apply to God, but confided wholly in his physicians; and having languished under the violence of his disorder for about three years, he died, in the forty-first year of his reign, and was buried in his own sepulchre.

Jehoshaphat being thirty-five years old, succeeded his father, Asa, in the kingdom of Judah, in the fourth year of Ahab, king of Israel. On his accession to the crown, he fortified his frontiers, and God was pleased to bless him, because he walked in the first\* ways of his father, which so endeared him to his people, that they brought him presents from all parts of his dominions, by which he became very rich. The first expressions of his zeal for the service of Jehovah, were the extirpation of those Sodomites who remained in his father's reign, and the destruction of the idolatrous high places and groves in Judah. In the third year of his reign he sent to several of his princes, requiring them to entertain Levites and priests in the cities of Judah; and, in order to establish true religion among them, he commanded them to take the book of the law, and teach the people throughout all Judah. This good work received the favour and approbation of God; and Jehoshaphat became the admiration of his own subjects, and the terror of the

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\* *First*, &c. In 2 Chron. xvii. 3, we read, "in the first ways of his father David." But it may be questioned, whether David be not inserted here, by the fault of transcribers, in the place of Asa: for in 1 Kings xxii. 43, and in 2 Chron. xx. 32, Asa is named, not David; and it is certain, Asa's first days were better than his last. But if we read it as here, "in the first ways of his father David;" we must understand it of David's ways, before he transgressed in the case of Bathsheba and Uriah.



neighbouring nations; insomuch, that the Philistines brought presents of silver to him, and the Arabians flocks, in token of homage. Nor was he less potent in arms than in wealth, for he had a standing army of above eleven hundred thousand men; besides those in garrisons.

While Jehoshaphat was thus wisely ordering the affairs of his kingdom, Benhadad, king of Syria, invades Ahab king of Israel with a vast army, and sends an insolent message, demanding an entire surrender of all his treasure, wives and children. Ahab, at first was terrified into submission, which, however was far from pacifying the arrogant Syrian; who repeating his insolent demand, with further requisitions, Ahab, took courage, and consulting his people, they advised him not to consent. Benhadad enraged at this, vowed revenge, and immediately attacked the city, thinking to carry it by storm. But God, in compassion to Israel, and provoked by the insults of the haughty Syrian king, sent a prophet to Ahab to assure him of victory. Ahab, aware of the smallness of his own force, (which consisted of little more than seven thousand men) and doubtful of success against so superior an enemy, asked the prophet by whom he should gain the victory? The prophet replied, "By the young men, servants to the princes of Israel." Ahab then numbered them, and found that they consisted of two hundred and thirty-two men; who, upon the signal given, sallied out of the city at noon-day, and surprised the Syrians. Benhadad, and the thirty-two princes that assisted him, were drinking in their tents as secure of victory; and when the news of the sally was brought to him, he commanded that they should bring them alive before him. But the assailants, followed by the rest of the little army, continued the assault in so determined a manner, that the Syrians were completely defeated, their king himself with difficulty escaping on a horse.

Ahab returning to the city laden with the spoils of the enemy, the prophet came and warned him to provide for his defence against the next year; for then, he informed him, that the Syrians would return again: which accord-



ingly happened; for the Syrians, to wipe off the disgrace of their being defeated by so small an army of the Israelites, told their king that\* the gods of the Israelites were gods of the hills, and that in consequence of fighting them in the hill-country, they were too strong for them: they therefore entreated him to permit them to fight in the champaign country, in which case they should not doubt of victory. The king accordingly took their advice, and having raised an army equal in number to that which was defeated the year before, returned to fight the Israelites with full assurance of success.

Ahab, by the advice of the prophet, was prepared to receive the enemy, and upon their appearance on his frontiers marched out with a resolution to give them battle, the prophet having assured him of success. The two armies having been in full view of each other seven days successively, at length engaged, and Israel, with a force very much inferior to the Syrians, soon routed them, killing upon the spot an hundred thousand men; the rest flying to Aphek, threw themselves into that city, where, instead of safety, twenty-seven thousand of them met their fate, being crushed to death by the falling down of the wall upon them. Benhadad, among others, fled to Aphek and hid himself; but his servants seeing no security in that place from their victorious enemy, persuaded him to let them throw themselves at the feet of the king of Israel; for, said they, the kings of Israel are merciful princes. Benhadad consents; and putting on sackcloth, and ropes about their necks, they went and presented themselves before Ahab in that suppliant posture, and begged mercy for their king and themselves. Ahab, overjoyed at this sight, melts into a tenderness, (which afterwards costs him dear) and kindly inquiring after Benhadad's welfare, calls him his *brother*. The soldiers readily catch hold of this kind expression, and repeat it, saying, "Thy brother Benhadad." Upon

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\* That, &c. See 1 Kings xx. 22.

which, Ahab then bade them conduct their master to him. Benhadad, thus unexpectedly preserved, appears before Ahab, who very affectionately receives him, and takes him into his chariot with him; where Benhadad, overjoyed, promises to restore all the places which he or his father had taken from Ahab and his predecessors. Ahab, approving these conditions, made a league with him, and set him at liberty.

Having made no better use of the advantage which he had obtained over the king of Syria, he receives a severe check from God, who sent a prophet to him with this message; "Since thou hast suffered the man to escape whom I appointed to utter destruction, thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people." Ahab, instead of humbling himself at the denunciation of this heavy sentence, or shewing any penitent sorrow for his fault, retired to his palace sullen and displeased; and soon after adds to his former guilt, by casting a covetous eye on the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which was situated contiguous to his own garden; for which he offered Naboth any other piece of land as an equivalent for it, or the value of it in money. Naboth had no reason to refuse so fair a proposal, had it not been for the express command of the law,\* of which Naboth was a conscientious professor, which forbade the children of Israel to sell their inheritance, and which Naboth pleaded as an excuse to Ahab. This disappointment, though a trifle in itself to so great a prince, so affected Ahab, that in a sudden fit of vexation, he took to his bed, and refused his food. Jezebel his wife, understanding the cause of his disquiet, reproaches him with pusillanimity, that he who was a king, would not exert his royal power to gratify himself. Then to relieve him, she exhorted him to be cheerful, for she had invented an expedient to put him in possession of the vineyard. The queen was not tardy in the execution of her wicked purpose; for writing letters in the king's

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\* Law. See Levit. xxv. 23, and Numb. xxxvi. 7, &c.

name, and sealing them with the royal signet, she sent them to the elders of Jezreel, commanding them to proclaim a fast, and to procure two false witnesses to depose, that Naboth had blasphemed God and the king, and then to stone him to death. This was accordingly executed; and that there might be none to lay claim to Naboth's inheritance, they stoned his sons\* also. Upon this Ahab takes possession of Naboth's vineyard, which he had no sooner done, than Elijah the prophet came to him by the express command of God, with this awful declaration, That since he had in so wicked a manner killed Naboth, and seized his vineyard, in the same place where dogs had licked Naboth's blood, should dogs lick the blood of Ahab; and that he and his race should utterly perish.

Ahab, terrified with this dreadful, but just doom, rent his clothes, and putting on sackcloth, humbled himself before the Lord; who, in respect to his repentance, told Elijah, that the evils he had threatened to Ahab's house should not happen during his reign, but in that of his son. And that Jezebel, the wicked contriver of this mischief, might not go unpunished, the prophet pronounced her sentence, which was, that dogs should eat her by the wall of Jezreel.

Ahab's humiliation might probably prove an inducement to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to make a league with him; which was soon after strengthened by an alliance between the two families, for Jehoshaphat married† his son and heir to Ahab's daughter. This unhappy league and alliance soon after occasioned an interview between the two kings, Jehoshaphat going to Samaria to visit Ahab, who entertains him and his friends in a splendid manner; and, improving this opportunity to the best advantage, he invites Jehoshaphat to go with him to the siege of Ramoth-Gilead, then in possession of the Syrians. Jehoshaphat unwarily consents, and promises

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\* *Sons.* See 2 Kings ix. 26.

† *Married.* See 2 Chron. xxi. 6, and 2 Kings viii. 18.



to assist him ; but recollecting himself, he would not undertake any thing in this affair, without the approbation of the Lord. Ahab thereupon assembled his prophets (prophets of the groves) and put the question to them ; who unanimously answered, “ Go up, for the Lord will deliver the place into thy hands.” Jehoshaphat, not satisfied with the report of these false prophets, asked Ahab if there were not a prophet of Jehovah at hand, of whom they might enquire ? Ahab told him there was one, but that he never prophesied good of him. But Jehoshaphat desiring to have him produced, Ahab, unwilling to disoblige him, sent for the prophet Micaiah ; who, charging Ahab’s prophets with falsehood, foretold that the enterprize would be fatal to Israel, and advised the two kings to desist. Ahab refusing to give credit to Micaiah’s words, ordered him to be secured in prison till his return ; and being resolved to give the Syrians battle, he marches towards them. Though Jehoshaphat had heard all that passed, and could not but know Micaiah to be a true prophet, yet having engaged himself with Ahab, he accompanied him to Ramoth-Gilead. And now being in sight of the enemy, Ahab began to cool, and recollecting Micaiah’s prophecy, he thought to frustrate it by a project of his own ; for disguising himself, he fought in his chariot like one of his captains, but he advised Jehoshaphat to fight in his robes. The king of Syria had commanded his officers to make all their efforts against the king of Israel, who being disguised, the Syrian officers not knowing him, took Jehoshaphat for him, and pressed him very hard ; but perceiving it was not Ahab, they left him. Jehoshaphat escaped at this time ; but Ahab’s political expedient did him no service, for he was mortally wounded by a random arrow : notwithstanding which, the action growing hotter, he was held up in his chariot to encourage his soldiers ; but about sun-set he died, and the retreat was sounded. The body of Ahab was then conveyed to Samaria, and buried there : but that the prophecy of Elijah might not go unfulfilled, his chariot being stained by the blood which flowed from his wound, it was washed in the pool



of Samaria, where the dogs licked up his blood, as had been foretold by the prophet.

As for Jehoshaphat, though he escaped without hurt in the battle, yet the Lord was displeased with him, and sent the prophet Jehu to meet him upon his return to Jerusalem, with directions to chide him for assisting the enemies of the Lord: but, lest he should be too much dejected, he was nevertheless assured, that God had graciously accepted him, highly approving his removal of the idolatrous groves, and because he had prepared his heart to serve him. This gentle reproof had so good an effect upon the pious Jehoshaphat, that he purged his kingdom throughout, himself going in person from Beersheba to Mount Ephraim, to bring the people back to the worship of the Lord. After this, he settled the legislature of his kingdom, and reducing all matters, public and private, under an exact economy, he assured his people, that if they did their duty, the Lord would be with them, which was soon found to be experimentally true; for the Moabites and Ammonites, with their confederates, came with a vast army, and invaded Judah, which greatly alarmed Jehoshaphat. This pious prince, however, immediately applies himself to God; and proclaiming a fast, the people were assembled from all the cities of Judah to Jerusalem, to ask help. Then Jehoshaphat, in the name of all the people, addressed himself in prayer\* to the Lord, standing before the congregation in the temple. To whom God was pleased, by his servant Jehaziel, the Levite, to give a gracious answer, and assure them of success the next day. Upon which, the whole congregation having worshipped the Lord, and the Levites having praised him with a loud voice, they marched out early in the morning to the wilderness of Tekoa; where, making a halt, Jehoshaphat in a short, but pathetic speech, exhorts them to the service of the Lord, assuring them, that if they would believe him and his

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\* *Prayer.* See 2 Chron. xx. 6.

prophets, they should prosper. The king then appointed singers, who were to march at the head of the army, and to sing, "Praise the Lord for his mercy endureth for ever." This chorus was to be the signal; for as they began to sing, it pleased the Lord so to confound and infatuate the ambuscades of the enemy, that they fell upon one another through mistake, the Ammonites, Moabites, and the people of Mount Seir, killing and destroying those that opposed them, and afterwards themselves; so that here was a victory gained without the people of Judah drawing a sword; for when Jehoshaphat came with his army where the enemy lay, he found nothing but dead bodies; and the spoil was so great, that it was more than they could carry off. Three days they were in gathering it, and on the fourth, meeting in the valley, they gave thanks to God for this deliverance; from which, the place was called "Berachah," or, "the Valley of Blessing."

Jehoshaphat enters Jerusalem in triumph with his victorious troops, and is received with the utmost expressions of joy by his people, who see the hand of God apparent in this defeat of their enemies; which indeed being so manifest, it struck terror into the neighbouring nations, insomuch, that Jehoshaphat enjoyed an uninterrupted peace all the rest of his reign.

On the decease of king Ahab, his son Ahaziah ascended the throne. With his father's kingdom, he inherited all his vices: yet, with this wicked prince, good Jehoshaphat was drawn into confederacy; they agreeing to fit out a fleet at their joint expence, to fetch gold from Ophir.\* But God not approving of this enter-

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\* *Ophir*. A variety of conjectures have been formed as to this place. It appears from consulting the different texts which mention Ophir, that the same ships which went to Tarshish, went also to Ophir, and that these sailed from Ezion-Geber, a port of the Red Sea; that the voyage required three years, and that the fleet returned with gold, ivory, &c.

Josephus says that Ophir is in the Indies. It is thought he meant Chersonesus Aurea, now called Malacca. Others say, Pegu is the ancient Ophir, and that

prize, it came to nothing; for the ships were lost in the harbour. Ahaziah, in the second year of his reign, received a hurt by a fall through a lattess\* in his upper room; upon which he sent messengers to enquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether he should recover, or not. This so provoked the Lord that he sent Elijah to meet the messengers, who said to them, "Is there no God in Israel, that you go to consult Baal-zebub,† the god of Ekron? Tell your master, the Lord saith he shall not recover of this distemper, but shall surely die." The messengers went no further, but returned with that account to Ahaziah, who, by the description they gave of the man they met, concluded that it must be the prophet Elijah. Whereupon he dispatches a captain with fifty men to fetch him. The captain approaching him as he sat on the top of a hill, said to him, "Man of God, come down." To whom Elijah answered, "If I am a man of God, let

its inhabitants are descended from the Jews, whom Solomon sent to work the mines of that country.

Columbus thought he had discovered it in Hispaniola. Some place it in Peru: others in Africa; and others in Spain.

Grotius thinks that Solomon's fleet did not proceed to India, but only to Aphar, a port of Arabia, to which the Indians brought their commodities.

Mr. Bruce was of opinion, that Ophir was on the eastern coast of Africa, called by the Arabians Zanguebar, and that Solomon's fleet went out of the Red Sea, and from the harbour of Ezion-Geber entered the Mediterranean Sea by a canal of communication, doubled the Cape of Guardafui, and coasted along Africa to Sophala, the country of which Ophir is a part.

*See Calmet's Dictionary.—Art. OPHIR.*

\* *Lattess.* That is, through the lattessed or chequered window of the battlement: for in Palestine the upper chamber was the roof of the house, where they used to walk, sup, and sleep, and this being built round with a battlement, as the law required, Deut. xxii. 8, to prevent any one's falling, it is probable that this chequered window gave way, and Ahaziah fell through it.

† *Baal-zebub.* He is called the god of flies, because he was wont to be invoked by the people of Ekron to drive away the flies, with which that country was much infested, being very hot and moist, and near the sea.



“ fire come down from heaven, and destroy thee and thy fifty men.” Immediately fire fell from heaven, and consumed the captain and his men. The same happened to another captain and fifty men : but the third captain, dreading the fate of his predecessors, came trembling over their ashes, and paying a most profound respect to the prophet, begged his life and that of his soldiers. While the captain was interceding for himself and his people, the Lord hinted to Elijah to go with the captain to Ahaziah, and fear nothing. Elijah obeyed, and delivered to him this message : “ Thus saith the Lord, Since thou hast sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, as if there were no God in Israel, thou shalt not come down from off that bed on which thou liest, but shalt surely die.” This event soon took place, for he died in the beginning of the second year of his reign, and was succeeded by his brother Jehoram.

And now the time being at hand when Elijah was to be translated to heaven, he went to Gilgal, taking Elisha, who was to be his successor in the prophetic office, with him : from thence they went to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho,\* and from Jericho to Jordan. In the two first places Elijah would have left Elisha behind him ; but he would not be shaken† off. When they were come to the river’s side, Elijah with his mantle divided the waters, so that they both passed over on dry ground. Elijah then asked Elisha what he should do for him before he parted from him ; Elisha

\* *Jericho.* This city was rebuilt by Hiel the Bethlehite, who, according to the word of the Lord, which above five hundred years before he spake by Joshua the son of Nun, Joshua vi. 26, laid the foundation of it in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his younger son Segub, 1 Kings xvi. 34.

† *Shaken, &c.* The total silence of any business which Elijah had at Bethel and Jericho, may lead to a conjecture, that Elijah knowing Elisha was to be his successor, took these journies to try his zeal, faith, and constancy. But it is possible that Elijah made this circuit to the Schools of the Prophets, to give them his last advice.



intreated a double\* portion of his spirit to be dispensed on him. Elijah told him that he asked a difficult thing; but yet it should be granted him, provided he could see† him when he should be taken from him; otherwise not.

While they were thus talking, there appeared a chariot of fire, and fiery horses, which parting them asunder, Elijah was carried up to heaven in a whirlwind.‡ Elisha, to let Elijah know that he saw this, and to express his concern at the loss of so great a public blessing, cried after him, "My father! my father! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof;"—thus lamenting the removal of the guide of his youth, and the guard of the national welfare. After which, rending his clothes to express his sorrow, he took up Elijah's mantle, which fell from him as he ascended, and with it dividing the waters of the Jordan, as Elijah had done before, he passed over.

\* *Double.* Elisha is here thought to have alluded to the law for inheritances among the Jews, Deut. xxi. 17, by which he, who in right of primogeniture, succeeded to the father in the government of the family, enjoyed a double part or portion of the goods, or estate. And therefore since God had been pleased to adopt him to be Elijah's successor in the prophetic ministry, he craved the privilege of primogeniture, a double portion of that Spirit with which Elijah had been endued.

† *See him.* Implying that there must be a spiritual vigilance in him who expects to receive a spiritual blessing.

‡ *Whirlwind.* Thus was Elijah, like Enoch in the antediluvian world, "translated that he should not see death," and in the presence of many witnesses. This was indeed a singular honour, designed, doubtless, to testify the approbation of that good man, who had been generally despised and insulted, and "of whom the world was not worthy."

Hereby also, the Lord gave a strong confirmation of the doctrines Elijah had taught, a decided proof of a future state, and an encouragement to the few godly persons who were left in the land, to persevere in righteousness, however persecuted for it.

Elisha was soon recognized as Elijah's successor by the sons of the prophets, who said one to another upon the miracle of dividing the water, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha." And when they came near him, they paid him the same respect which they had done to Elijah. After this he went to Jericho; where the inhabitants complaining that their water was unwholesome, and their land barren, he remedied both. Going from hence to Bethel, a company of youths scoffing at, and mocking his venerable head, cried, "Go up, thou bald-head! Go up, thou bald-head!"\* The prophet resenting this indignity offered to his character, cursed them in the name of the Lord: upon which, two bears rushed out of the wood upon them, and killed† two and forty of them. From hence Elisha went by the way of Mount Carmel to Samaria; where God soon gave him an opportunity of exerting his prophetic office in a miraculous manner.

Jehoram being advanced to the throne of Israel by the death of his brother Ahaziah, was not altogether so wicked as his father and brother; for he removed the idols of Baal, but continued to imitate the im-

\* *Bald-head.* This was not only a reproach on account of the prophet's baldness, but a profane allusion to the ascension of his predecessor Elijah in a fiery chariot to heaven. "Ascend," said they, "ascend" as he did. This shewed how little effect the miraculous removal of that great prophet had upon the people.

† *Killed.* It is not to be supposed that so severe a judgment had been inflicted upon these youths, had their mockings proceeded only from childish folly. It is therefore reasonable to conclude, that the prophet was sensible that they had been encouraged by their idolatrous parents, or others of that place, (for Bethel had been, and, for ought that appears, was then the chief seat of idolatry in Israel, where Jeroboam had set up one of his calves, 1 Kings xii. 28, 29,) to deride and mock him as a prophet of the Lord, who was zealous against their idolatry: and the indignity offered to him in his prophetic capacity reflecting on the Lord, who sent him, was therefore the more exemplarily punished, that others might fear, and learn to beware.

pieties\* of Jeroboam. However, he began his reign with a just war upon the Moabites; the occasion of which was this: the Moabites, from the time that David conquered† them, had continued tributaries to Israel till Ahab's death: upon which they refused to pay their tribute‡ to his son Ahaziah, who, having but a short and sickly reign, had not reduced them. Jehoram makes demand of the tribute, of Mesha, king of Moab, who refusing to comply with the ancient contract, Jehoram resolves to compel him by force; and raising an army, he sends to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to assist him in the recovery of his right. Jehoshaphat readily consents, and with their joint forces they marched through the wilderness of Edom, and took the king§ of Edom with them. These three kings taking a circuitous route, in order to come upon the rear of the enemy and surprise them, it occupied seven days; during which, they being in a scorching desert, water grew extremely scarce, and they were all ready to perish. Jehoram indeed concluded they must all die with thirst, or fall into the enemy's hands: but the piety of Jehoshaphat found out a remedy to prevent both; for taking the two kings with him, he went to the prophet Elisha, who was angry at the sight of Jehoram, and reproached him with the idolatry of his parents; but for the sake of Jehoshaphat, the Lord

\* *Impieties.* In worshipping the golden calves set up by Jeroboam, and compelling the people to do the same; lest, if the people should go up to Jerusalem to worship the true God in the temple there, they should revolt to the king of Judah. This was Jeroboam's false and wicked policy, and continued by his successors, till at last, for their blindness and obstinacy, they were all cut off.

† *Conquered.* See 2 Sam. viii. 2.

‡ *Tribute.* This was an hundred thousand lambs, and as many rams, with the wool, 2 Kings iii. 4.

§ *King.* Though he is called a king here, 2 Kings iii. 9, he was indeed but a viceroy to Jehoshaphat, 1 Kings xxii. 47, for Edom had been tributary to Judah ever since David subdued them, 2 Sam. viii. 14, and for some time after this continued so.

gave them instructions\* to procure water, and at the same time promised them victory over the Moabites. The next morning water came on a sudden by the way of Edom; and the Moabites, who, on the invasion of the three kings had collected all their forces to oppose them, seeing the water like blood, (for so God had ordered it) and in a place where they knew there never used to be any water, concluded that the three kings had quarreled, and that their armies had engaged, began to plunder their camp; but were so warmly received by the Israelites, that they not only killed many on the spot, but pursued them to their own country, destroyed their fortified places, filled up their wells, and ravaged wherever they came. The king of Moab fled to his capital, Kirharaseh, where the confederate armies besieged him, and employed all their engines against the city, but could not demolish the wall. However, the king of Moab, hopeless of maintaining the place against so great a force, choosing seven hundred brave men, made a desperate sally, intending to break through the king of Edom's quarters: but being repulsed, he was obliged to retreat into the city; where, in an act of despair, and resolution to dispute it to the last, he sacrificed his eldest† son upon the wall of the city, in full view of the Israelitish army, who being struck with horror at so desperate an action, raised the siege, and returned to their own country.

\* *Instructions.* See 2 Kings iii. 16.

† *Eldest.* Some think (particularly Tremellius and Junius in the Annotations on Amos i. 16, in the English ii. 1,) that it was not his own son that the king of Moab thus sacrificed, but the son and heir of the king of Edom, whom he had taken in the late sally. But, had it been so, the cruelty of the action would have enraged the confederate kings to have pressed the siege with redoubled fury, and not to have desisted as they did: it is therefore more probable that it was his own son, and that his burning the bones of the king of Edom into lime, mentioned in Amos, related to some other fact and time.

Some think that the language of this shocking ceremony was—"See to what a desperate strait you have reduced me—you see the whole process: the child brought out—the wood—the fire—the knife—why will you force me to the slaugh-



Elisha, having left the three kings, returned to Samaria, where a certain widow, relict of one of the sons of the prophets, complained to him that her husband had left her poor, and that having nothing to satisfy his debts, the creditors came to take her two sons, and make slaves\* of them. Elisha asked her, whether she had any thing left in her house? She answered, Only a little oil. Elisha ordered her to borrow what empty vessels she could of her neighbours, and take them home with her; then, to shut herself up with her two sons, and from her little, but multiplied store, to pour into the vessels till they were all full. The widow obeyed, and the oil increased till she had filled all the vessels. Then with tears of joy returning to her benefactor, she relates the success; who advised her to sell as many as would discharge her debts, and maintain herself and her family with the rest.

This miracle was succeeded by another. Elisha being hospitably entertained at the house of a wealthy Shunammite, and pleased with the kind treatment and accommodations he received from his civil host, sent his servant Gehazi to the Shunammite's wife, to acquaint her that he would gladly make her a grateful amends for her civility, and if she had any request to the king or the general, he would present it for her. She told Gehazi, that she lived amicably with her neighbours,

ter? Do you proceed? Let his embittered spirit haunt you, terrify you, blast you even to death!"

See much on this subject in FRAGMENTS annexed to Taylor's edition of Calmet, No. 156.

By this dreadful act, both the king of Moab, and the inhabitants of the city would be more bitterly enraged against Israel than ever, and be more inflexibly determined to persist in the contest. This being perceived by the besiegers, might be the reason of their raising the siege and departing home,

*Cradock's History, p. 556.*

\* *Slaves.* The Jews, the Greeks, the Romans, and other ancient nations exercised, and thought they had a right to exercise, the most uncontrolled authority over their children. The Jews might sell their children for seven years, in order to pay their debts, and their creditors might compel them to do so. The prophet does not reprove the creditor nor the mother in this case, but puts her in a method to discharge the debt.

and had no occasion to complain, or seek redress for any thing. Gehazi delivered her reply to his master, who asked him, what he thought he could do for her? Gehazi replied, "She hath no child, and her husband is old." Then, sending for her, he said, "About this season, according to the course of life, thou shalt have a son." She at first distrusted the prophet; but soon after she found herself pregnant. When this child was grown up, so that he could run about, he was taken sick in the field, while he was with his father among the reapers; and being carried home by a servant, he expired in his mother's arms.

The afflicted parent, thus bereft of her only child, carried him up to the chamber where Elisha used to lodge, and laid him upon the bed; then with impatient haste and grief she hurries away to Carmel, where the prophet then resided. Her interview with him, and the effects which it produced, are beautifully described in the Sacred Text. "And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi, Behold, yonder is that Shunammite: run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? and she answered, It is well. And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone, for her soul is vexed within her: and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? Did I not say, Do not deceive me? Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child. And the mother of the child said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her. And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child, but there was neither voice,

“ nor hearing : wherefore he went again to meet him, “ and told him saying, The child is not awaked. And “ when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the “ child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in “ therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and “ prayed unto the Lord. And he went up, and lay “ upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, “ and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his “ hands, and he stretched himself upon the child, and “ the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, “ and walked in the house to and fro, and went up, and “ stretched himself upon him : and the child sneezed se- “ ven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he call- “ ed Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he “ called her : and when she was come in unto him, he “ said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at “ his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up “ her son, and went out.”

After this miracle, Elisha departed to Gilgal, where, at that time, there happened to be a great dearth. He ordered his servant to prepare some pottage for his disciples, who were many in number ; and one going into the field, through mistake, instead of wholesome herbs, gathered his lap full of a poisonous plant, called *Colloquintida* ;\* and shredding them into the pot, they no sooner tasted of the pottage, than they exclaimed to Elisha that it was poison. The prophet calls for some meal to put into the pot ; upon which the pottage became wholesome and palatable, and they did all eat without any harm. During his stay here in the college of the prophets, Elisha miraculously fed an hundred men with twenty loaves of barley, and had some to spare.

These miracles encouraged the young prophets to

\* *Colloquintida*, or *Colocynthis*, the *Bitter Apple* or *Wild Gourd*. Some have called it *The gall of the whole earth*. It is now used, in small quantities as a purge : but used largely for food, must have been very prejudicial, if not fatal.

address themselves to Elisha to have their habitation enlarged, which they complained was too scanty for them ; and therefore they desired leave of him that they might go to Jordan to fetch timber, and that he would accompany them. He went with them ; and as they were felling trees, one of them dropped his axe into the river, and acquainting Elisha with the loss, and shewing him where it had fallen in, the axe floated upon the water, and the man took it up.

Elisha returning to Samaria, a fresh opportunity was presented, of shewing the miraculous power with which God had invested him ; for Naaman, the king of Syria's general, a man famous for exploits in war, and in great esteem with his master, being leprous, was advised by his friends to obtain letters of recommendation from the king of Syria to the king of Israel, to procure a remedy from the prophet Elisha. His master consents ; and the general, taking a noble present with him, sets forward for Samaria ; and having delivered the letter to the king of Israel, the king suspecting it to be a design to quarrel with him, cried out, " Am I a God, to kill and make alive, that this man doth send to me to recover a man of his leprosy ? " News of this soon reached Elisha's ear, who sent this message to the king, " Let the leper come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. "

The king, referring Naaman to the prophet, with all his stately equipage he went to Elisha's house, who, without ceremony, sends his servant to him, commanding him to go and wash himself seven times in the Jordan, and his flesh should come again. The haughty Syrian, who expected great formalities from the prophet, and that by some personal act he would have performed the cure, began to storm at this contempt, and went away in a rage ; but upon better advice he obeyed the prophet's direction, and having dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, his flesh came again like that of a young child. Then returning to Elisha, he acknowledged there was no God in all the earth



but the God of Israel, and importunately pressed Elisha to receive a present from him, which the prophet refused.

Naaman, in a grateful sense of the benefit he had received, protested he would never offer sacrifice to any but the God of Israel, and begged two mules burden of earth\* to carry home with him; and to deprecate any offence that might arise from his waiting on the king his master, when he went to worship in the temple of Rimmon, the god of the Syrians, he, addressing himself to the prophet, said, "The Lord† pardon thy  
"servant, that when my master goeth into the house of  
"Rimmon, and he leaning on my hand, I bow myself

\* *Earth.* With which, it is supposed, he intended to build an altar; zealously, but ignorantly, thinking either that there was some inherent sanctity in the earth of that country, or that the God of Israel would not be sacrificed to upon any other earth than the earth of Israel, or that the prophet who performed the cure, could put some miraculous virtue into the earth. Such superstitious ideas are not to be wondered at in a heathen.

† *The Lord.* Various are the opinions of interpreters on this text, 2 Kings v. 18, some imputing hypocrisy to Naaman in this act, others excusing him. It is most certain that all adoration of idols was forbidden to the Israelites, without any exception or reservation; but strangers were not under that obligation. Some from Elisha's answer very inadvertently infer an allowance or connivance at this idolatrous adoration of Naaman's, by saying, "Go in peace," (which was no more than a valediction among the Israelites.) Others, varying the version, read, "When my master went, &c." for, "When my master goeth, &c." and make the sense of the words to intreat pardon for a sinful practice in times past, not a licence to continue in it for the time to come. Others again, not allowing any to halt between two opinions, are inquisitive to know why Elisha did not admonish Naaman of this sin, which he acknowledged. To which, take the answer of Peter Martyr, and others; 1. Naaman was but in the infancy of his conversion, and it might have been inexpedient, if not dangerous, to extinguish the smoking flax of his good disposition towards the true worship; for admonitions ought to be timed to the weak. 2. The prophet had no need of reproving Naaman, because he was conscious of his sin: wherefore he did not so much want to be instructed as to be cherished and strengthened by the help of God.

“ in the house of Rimmon,\* the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.” To this the prophet gave him no other answer than “ Go in peace.”

Elisha having thus dismissed the Syrian general, Gehazi thinking it unreasonable that such a potent and wealthy person should depart without paying any thing for so great a benefit, resolves to get something for himself, though his master Elisha had refused the presents: therefore, secretly, as he thought, he followed Naaman, and soon overtook him; who knowing him to be the prophet's servant, out of respect to his master, alighted from his chariot, and demanded his business. Gehazi, forging a message in his master's name, desired a talent of silver, and two changes of garments, for two sons of the prophets, that were just come to visit him. Naaman, glad of an opportunity of obliging the prophet Elisha, pressed Gehazi to take two talents of silver beside the garments, and sent them with him by two of his servants, whom Gehazi dismissed before they came to the house, and then hid the money and the garments. But his master, by inspiration, knowing where he had been, and what he had done, taxes him with it, and reproaches him with falsehood; and then for his punishment told him, that Naaman's leprosy should continue upon him and his posterity. Gehazi was immediately struck with it, and withdrew from his master's presence a leper as white as snow. †

About this time war was declared between the kings of Syria and Israel; and the king of Syria consulting

\* *Rimmon*. An idol of which we read nothing in any other place. Some think it is a name of the *Sun*, others of *Saturn*. It is not likely that Naaman requested leave to worship this idol, after the declaration he had made; but he begged permission still to attend his master when he adored it; and mentions this, lest he should be thought to partake in the guilt of idolatry, by being present.

† *Snow*. The crime of Gehazi was exceedingly aggravated, for it included—a profanation of God's name; a downright theft; deliberate and impudent lying; a desperate contempt of God's omniscience, justice and holiness; a horrible re-

with his officers where to lay an ambuscade for the king of Israel, and having pitched upon the place, Elisha gave notice of it to the king of Israel, who sent a sufficient force to secure it. The king of Syria suspecting himself to be betrayed by his officers, taxed them with it; but one\* of them assured him that it could be no person but Elisha the prophet, who was endued with power to discover even the secrets that were spoken in the king's bed-chamber. The king of Syria then enquired where he might be found; and having learnt that he was at Dothan, a small city near Samaria, he sent a party of horse and foot to seize him. Elisha, having notice of their approach by his servant, who in great alarm came and informed him of the circumstance, bid him not fear, for he had a better army to defend him than those that came to attack him; then praying to the Lord, the young man's eyes were opened, and he saw the mountains covered with horses and chariots of fire† round about his master.

The Syrians coming near to seize Elisha, he prayed again, and the Lord struck them with blindness.

proach cast on the prophet; and a pernicious scandal given to Naaman, and every other Syrian who might hear of it.

*Poole's Annot.*

How true is it that "the love of money is the root of all evil," and that "they who *will be rich*, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

\* *One*, &c. Probably one that had been at Samaria with Naaman, and who might there, by the miracle he saw wrought on the general, get further knowledge of the power of Elisha in other things.

† *Fire*. Though there was probably something miraculous in the defence of Elisha, yet it is a truth applicable to all who truly fear and serve God—"that the angels of the Lord encamp round about them," and are "ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation." God's people have a divine protector, and while they are engaged in the path of duty, each of them may say with David in the midst of apparent danger, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me round about;" for, "if God be for us, who can be against us?"

Elisha then telling them they were out of the way, said if they would follow him, he would shew them the man they looked for ; upon which he led them into the midst of Samaria. The king of Israel having so great a party of the enemy in his power, would have put them to the sword ; but Elisha would not permit it, advising him to treat them kindly, and give them liberty, which he did. This Elisha did to create a good opinion in the king of Syria for the generous usage of his subjects, when they were at the mercy of the Israelites.

This generosity, however, did not long ensure peace ; for shortly, Benhadad, king of Syria, having collected a vast army, laid close siege to Samaria, and reduced the city to such extreme distress by famine, that an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver,\* and three† quarters of a pint of pulse‡ for five.

\* *Silver.* Reckoning these pieces of silver, or shekels, at fifteen pence a piece, they came to five pounds sterling.

† *Three, &c.* This was the least measure for dry things, and was called Cab, mentioned only in 2 Kings vi. 25.

‡ *Pulse.* All translators have been manifestly mistaken in rendering the Hebrew word *Chirjonim* or *Dibjonim* by that of *Dove's dung*, 2 Kings vi. 25, and interpreters have invented several ridiculous conjectures to explain how the famine could have been so great, that the inhabitants should be obliged to buy so small a measure of it at so great a price. Some think they were forced to make use of it for food, though there is not the least nourishment in dove's dung. There are others who are of opinion that it served them to dung and fatten the fields and gardens of Samaria, to provide against the famine the year following. But how can it be thought that there could be many fields within that city, or that those who had some grain remaining to live upon, could think of sowing it in such a scarcity ? The Talmudists have pretended to avoid all these difficulties, by translating the term of the original by *crop of doves*, and have affirmed that they kept many doves at Samaria to bring them provisions from the country, by disgorging the grain which they had picked up, and which their masters sold at a dear rate. But who can imagine that so great a number of doves, as was necessary for such a purpose, could have been suffered to live in a city so pinched with famine ? Or that the doves could have been so docile as to bring to their masters what they had ranged for ?



These sorts of provisions were above the reach of the poor, who were driven to the utmost extremity, insomuch, that mothers\* were compelled to eat their own children; which the king hearing, was so much affected, that he rent his clothes, and in a vehement rage, swore to take off the head of Elisha, whom he considered as the cause of this calamity. Elisha had notice of the king's design against his life by divine revelation, and told the company where he was, that a messenger was coming to dispatch him, and that the king was at his heels. While Elisha was telling his friends that this calamity was not accidental, but a judgment from God for their sins, the king came in, and hearing him say so, replied, "If this evil be from the Lord, why should I wait for him any longer?" Elisha unable any longer to contain himself, cried out, "Hear the word of the

Or indeed that they could have found nourishment in a country which was in a manner covered with the enemy, who had altogether laid it waste? Junius, and others, think they have found a remedy for all these inconveniencies, by translating the Hebrew word by that of the belly or entrails of doves: but their proofs are so solidly refuted by Bochart, that every reasonable person must be of his mind. He observes that the Arabians give the name of *dove's-dung*, or *sparrow's dung* to two several things: the first is a kind of moss that grows on trees or stony ground, which resembles a sort of pease, to which those of Racea, upon the river Euphrates, give this name. They also give the name of *Cicer*, *Chick-Pease*, or *Dove's* or *Sparrow's Dung* to a sort of pease or pulse which was common in Judea, and which, when dried or parched, resembles the dung of pigeons, as may be seen, 2 Sam. xvii. 28, where the Gileadites and the Ammonites in the present which they brought to David had *parched pulse*, as St. Jerome has very well rendered it. Whence the famous city of Emesus, on the frontiers of Judea seems to have taken its name. Travellers further observe, that they have magazines in Grand Cairo and Damascus, where they constantly fry this kind of pulse, of which those who go in pilgrimage to Mecca, make provision for their journey. Some think that even *coffee* is meant by this word.

\* *Mothers*. This was one of those judgments which Moses had long before told the Israelites should fall upon them, Deut. xxviii. 53, if they rebelled against the Lord.

“ Lord : thus saith the Lord, To-morrow at this time shall a measure\* of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for the same price.” A certain lord who waited on the king hearing this, and considering the present scarcity, looking upon it as an impossibility, said in derision, “ If it should rain corn, could this thing be done?” This incredulity and contempt provoked the prophet to give him this short answer, “ Thou shalt live to see this, but shalt not eat thereof.” This impossibility, (as it appeared to them) was soon developed by the secret and invisible power of God, who in a miraculous manner verified what he had spoken by his prophet.

At this time there were four lepers who sat at the entrance of the city, being by the law† forbidden to be in the city, lest they should infect others. These poor creatures concerting what measures to take in this miserable condition, concluded that if they went into the city they must there starve, and if they continued without the gate they could expect no other fate, resolved to try the generosity of the enemy ; concluding that at the worst they could but die. This they put in execution before it was day, expecting to be seized by some of the out-guards, but meeting with no man, they went on to the camp, where to their great amazement they found no living creature but the horses and asses, all the soldiers having fled : for God had so disposed it in the night, that the Syrians fancying they heard a noise of chariots and horses, concluded the king of Israel had called in to his assistance the Hittites and Egyptians, and were coming to surprise them. This apprehension filled them with such alarm, that it im-

\* *Measure.* This is thought to contain a gallon and a half, or six quarts. It is particularly called *Seab*, and by the Latin interpreters commonly rendered *Modius*, 2 Kings vii. 1.

† *Law.* See Levit. xiii. 46.

mediately spread through the whole army, and deserting their camp, every man shifted for himself, and made the best of his way home. The poor lepers meeting with no resistance, passed through the camp, and before they fell to other plunder, first gratified their hunger; then seizing what rich moveables they could carry off, they hid them. But considering that whilst they were thus regaling and providing for themselves, their countrymen were under the dismal apprehension of starving in the town, or perishing by the enemy, they returned to the gate, and gave the porter notice of the enemy's flight, who soon communicated it to the king. But the king suspecting this to be a stratagem of the Syrians to entice them out of the city, sent out parties to discover whether there were any ambuscades laid. The parties returning, told him that all the ways were strewed with arms and garments, which the Syrians had dropped as they fled. Upon this the people impatiently rushed out of the city, and began to plunder the Syrian camp; where, besides great riches, they found such a store of provisions, that being brought into Samaria, a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel. And that this plenty might not be embezzled, the king appointed the nobleman who before had slighted Elisha's prediction, to guard the gate through which the spoil of the Syrian camp was to be brought; where the impatient people crowding in great numbers, trampled him under foot, so that he died: and thus, though he saw the plenty, yet he tasted not of it, as the prophet had predicted.

After this, a severe and tedious famine wasted the land of Israel; of which Elisha gave his hostess, the Shunammite, warning, advising her to go to some other country with her family, and tarry there till the famine should cease: which she did; and at the end of seven years returning, she found her estate seized and possessed by others in her absence. And not prevailing with the usurpers of her right to give her repossession, she was forced to address herself to the king, who at

that time was talking with Gehazi, whom the king commanded to recount to him the miraculous performances of his master, the prophet Elisha. Gehazi seeing the Shunammite and her son, coming to present her petition to the king, told him, that she was the woman, of whom he had been speaking, and this was her son whom Elisha brought again to life. The king hearing a confirmation of what Gehazi had told him from the woman's mouth, gave order for her estate to be restored to her, and that the profits thereof should be paid her, from the time she had left the land until that day.

From the miraculous raising of the siege of Samaria till about this time, we have no other account than that of the sickness of Benhadad king of Syria, which happened about the same time that Elisha arrived at Damascus, the capital of Syria. The king hearing of it, and being well acquainted with the power of the prophet, sent a servant of his, named Hazael, with a present to enquire of the Lord by him, whether he should recover of his sickness. The prophet told him he might recover;\* but, added he, "The Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely die." The sense of which, and the mischief he would afterwards do to Israel, made the prophet look sternly on Hazael, and drew tears from Elisha's eyes. Hazael asked the cause of his grief. Elisha told him that it proceeded from the sense he had of the evil he would one day bring upon Israel, in demolishing their fortifications, putting

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\* *Recover.* This text of 2 Kings viii. 10. seems difficult and contradictory to itself, and which the versions confound. The Rabbins and others read, "Thou shalt not recover;" but the Chaldee, Septuagint, and the Latin versions, "Thou shalt recover." But this text, rightly taken, admits of no contradiction: for the former part of the answer, "Thou shalt recover," related to the nature of the disease, which of itself was not mortal, but curable; the latter part, "he shall surely die," related to the fore-knowledge the prophet had received from God, of the treachery of Hazael, who should murder Benhadad.



their men to the sword, dashing their children in pieces, and ripping up their women with child. Hazael, considering the meanness of his present condition, and the improbability of his doing such things, expressed his abhorrence of so great an inhumanity.\* But the prophet answered, "The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king of Syria." Hazael's ambition took wing at this; and returning to his master, he told him that he should certainly recover; but to prevent it, the next day he stifled him, and usurped his throne. Let us now return to the affairs of the kingdom of Judah.

Jehoshaphat, the good king of Judah, four years before his death, had taken his son Jehoram† into partnership with him in the government; after which he died, and left his son in sole possession of the throne of Judah; who was so far from imitating his father's piety, that he walked in the steps of the kings of Israel, as Ahab's family had done; for which this reason is assigned, that he had the daughter of Ahab to his wife.‡ Nor did he himself only become an idolater, but compelled his subjects to be idolaters also. He was, in short, a complication of all wickedness, and so unnaturally cruel, that he murdered his six brothers, and several other princes. But he was soon reprov'd and punished; for there came a writing to him from Elijah§ the prophet, to tell him,

\* *Inhumanity.* When the prophet intimated to Hazael the horrid cruelties he would commit, he immediately exclaimed, "What! is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" Those who are unacquainted with the depravity and deceitfulness of the human heart, little think what crimes they may commit, if strongly tempted to them. But we ought always to suspect ourselves, and pray against temptation, for, "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool," and such, alas! the presumptuous Hazael proved, for immediately on his departure, he began to fulfil the prediction.

† *Jehoram,* or Joram.

‡ *Wife.* See 2 Chron. xxi. 6, so dangerous a thing it is to mix with a sinful communion.

§ *Elijab.* Elijah having been translated some years before, it is thought by some that Elijab instead of Elisha is by neglect crept into the text. Others

That since he had deviated from the ways of his pious ancestors, and followed the wicked examples of the kings of Israel, and murdered his brothers, who were better than himself, God would visit him and his people with a great plague, and destroy him with a painful disease; which soon after happened; for the Edomites\* revolted from the government of Judah, and set up a king of their own. And though Jehoram went to suppress them, and did some small execution on them, yet they maintained their revolt, and were never afterwards reduced† to the subjection of Judah. At the same time Libnah‡ threw off the yoke of Judah: and literally to fulfil what Elijah's letter threatened,§ the Lord stirred up the Philistines and Arabians to disturb Jehoram, who breaking into Jerusalem, plundered the royal palace, and carried away his wives and children, leaving him none but Jehoahaz,|| his youngest son. And now to complete the judgment denounced against Jehoram's person, God smote him in his bowels with an incurable

pretend that Elijah sent this letter from Paradise, or the place to which he was translated, to king Jehoram by an angel in human form, or by the prophet Elisha. But Junius and Tremellius say that Elijah in his life-time wrote it by a prophetic foresight, and left it for him.

\* *Edomites.* Whom David had subdued; 2 Sam. viii. 14, and who, from that time to this, had no king of their own, but were governed by a viceroy or deputy set over them, 1 Kings xxii. 47.

† *Reduced.* In this the prophecy of Isaac seems to have been in a great measure completed, which foretold Edom's subjection to Israel, and his breaking afterwards Jacob's yoke from off his neck, Gen. xxvii. 40.

‡ *Libnah.* This was a city and territory of good account, which in Joshua's time had a king of its own, Josh. x. 29, 30, and was afterwards given to the children of Aaron for a city of refuge to the manslayer, Josh. xxxi. 13,

§ *Threatened.* See 2 Chron. xxi. 14.

|| *Jehoahaz.* Who is also called Ahaziah, 2 Chron. xxii. 1, and Azariah, v. 6.

disease, under which he laboured two years, when his bowels fell out.

Thus died Jehoram, after having reigned eight\* years. His death was unlamented of the people, who buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchre of the kings, nor with any funeral pomp or honour. His youngest son, Ahaziah,† succeeded him, all his other sons having been slain by the Arabians and Philistines in the late incursion. His reign was but short, and nothing of consequence occurred in it. What was remarkable, was his affection to, and alliance with, Jehoram king of Israel, with whom he marched against Hazael, king of Syria, to Ramoth-Gilead, where Jehoram being defeated and wounded, and returning to Jezreel to be healed, Ahaziah went thither to visit him, and bear him company while he lay sick of his wounds.

And now the time was come when God in his righteous providence had determined that Ahab's family should be

\* *Eight.* Of these eight years he is supposed to have reigned four as *Co-Rex* with his father, and the other as sole king.

† *Ahaziah.* Transcribers must necessarily have been mistaken in what is said of Ahaziah, 2 Chron. xxii. 2, that he was two and forty years old when he began to reign; for if this had been right, Ahaziah must have been born two years before his father; as it is observed in ch. xxi. 20, that Jehoram his father was but forty years old when he died. This circumstance is likewise directly opposite to 2 Kings viii. 26, where it is plainly said, that Ahaziah was but twenty-two years old when he began to reign. The most learned interpreters acknowledge that this difficulty cannot be resolved without admitting it to be a fault in the transcribers. Some think that the words should be rendered, that Ahaziah reigned to the age of four and forty years; which is plainly contrary to the text. Others think the forty-two years do not relate to Ahaziah, but to the kingdom of Israel, which can by no means be allowed. It seems indeed most reasonable to own that there is a fault crept into the text by the negligence of transcribers, who have written *forty-two* years instead of *twenty-two*. This solution seems to be the most probable, if we consider the agreement of the versions; the Septuagint in several copies, the manuscripts of Cambridge and Oxford, that of Rome, and the Syriac and Arabic, with several others, retain the number of *twenty-two*.



extirpated, and Jezebel be punished for her wickedness. In order to which, Elisha calling to him one of the sons of the prophets, bids him go to Ramoth-Gilead, and there anoint\* Jehu, which he did : and Jehu was immediately by general consent acknowledged king, and proclaimed by the army. The prophet having, at Jehu's anointing, given him instructions to take vengeance of Jezebel, and to cut off Ahab's family, he, in a council obliged the officers of the army to let no man stir out of Ramoth-Gilead; that Jehoram hearing nothing of what had happened, might not be apprehensive of danger. Jehu, being punctually obeyed in this, set forward for Jezreel, that he might surprize and seize the king there. But in his march he was discovered from a watch-tower by a sentinel, who gave notice of it to the king; and he receiving no accounts from two messengers whom he sent to inquire, mounted his chariot, and taking his friend Ahaziah with him, they both went out to meet Jehu, which meeting happened to take place in the very spot of ground which Ahab had taken from Naboth the Jezreelite. Jehoram being come within hearing, asked Jehu whether he came in peace or not? To whom Jehu replied, "What peace canst thou expect, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many?" Jehoram guessed the rest, and exclaiming "Treason!" to his friend Ahaziah, fled; but Jehu with a swift arrow soon reached him, shooting him through the heart; and seeing him drop, commanded an officer to throw him into Naboth's field, that the word of the Lord might be fulfilled. Ahaziah seeing his friend Jehoram thus disposed of, fled another way; but Jehu having a watchful eye upon him, detached a party to pursue and dispatch him

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\* *Anoint.* This seems to be the second time of Jehu's being anointed; for the first was 1 Kings xix. 16, when the prophet Elijah anointed him and Hazael over Israel and Syria. But that unction was only previous, and, as it were, a prognostic of their reign. But this second unction of Jehu, by the order of Elisha, was a collating him to the crown, and making him king.



too; which they did: for being mortally wounded, he fled to Megiddo, and died there; from whence his servants removed his body to the royal sepulchre at Jerusalem.

Jehu having thus done execution on the two kings,\* makes the best of his way to Jezreel, where Jezebel the queen-mother having dressed herself, and resolving to keep up her grandeur, reproached him with treachery, comparing him to Zimri, who slew his king and master Elah. Jehu looking up to the window where she was, called to the eunuchs, who, by his order, threw her out of the window, and her blood by the fall stained the walls of the palace. When she lay upon the pavement, the horses trampled on her, and the dogs devoured her body. Jehu entering the palace refreshed himself, and his men; and recollecting the condition of this wicked woman, commanded his servants to take care of her body and bury her, because she was of royal extraction. But when they went to inquire after her, they found no part of her body remaining, except her skull, her feet, and the palms of her hands; which when Jehu heard, he observed to those that brought the news, that this was the effect of Elijah's prophecy, who predicted, that in Jezreel, dogs should eat Jezebel, and that her carcass should be as dung upon the earth, so that no one should say, "This is Jezebel."

Jehu, to make sure of as many of Ahab's family as were any way within reach, sends a letter to those who had the care of the princes† of the blood at Samaria, to choose the fittest of them for their king. This he did to sound their inclinations; but they hearing how he had

\* *Kings.* Ahaziah's destruction was due to him, not only as he was a branch of Ahab's family, (being the son of Ahab's daughter) to all of whom utter destruction was denounced; but as he walked, the little time he reigned, in the way of his grandfather Ahab.

† *Princes.* 2 Kings x. 1, Ahab is said to have had seventy sons in Samaria, under which term nephews or grandsons are sometimes comprehended.

dispatched two kings already, and perceiving that all things looked ill to the house of Ahab, sent a submissive answer to Jehu, and referred themselves wholly to him. Upon which he sent an order to them, to bring him the heads of those princes by that time to-morrow. He was punctually obeyed in this; after which he put to death all that remained of Ahab's family in Israel, the great men of his court, and all his friends and priests.

In his way to Samaria he met with the brothers and kindred of Ahaziah, who were going to pay a visit to the court at Samaria: these he likewise slew, and at Samaria cut off all that remained of the house of Ahab. Then intimating that he designed himself to worship Baal, he, by proclamation invited all the ministers and priests of Baal to offer sacrifice in his temple, to which they repaired in great numbers; and that none but his worshippers might perish, he gave strict charge to them to search the temple, and see that none of the servants of Jehovah were there among them, but the worshippers of Baal only. Then setting a guard of eighty men, to prevent any escape, as soon as the burnt-offering was ended, he ordered the guard to go in and put them all to the sword. This done, he commanded the images to be burnt, and the temple of Baal to be razed to the ground.

But yet, notwithstanding his zeal for the service of God, he suffered the golden calves,\* which Jeroboam had set up at Bethel and Dan to remain. However, Jehu's diligence in readily executing God's judgments upon the house of Ahab was so acceptable, that the crown of Israel was entailed upon his family to the fourth generation. Yet because he offended in following the

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\* *Golden Calves.* The setting up of these being not so much a religious as a political piece of idolatry, contrived at the first division of the kingdom to keep the Israelites from going up to Jerusalem to worship, lest they should in time take the crown along with them, and re-unite themselves in Judah: the same interest and reason of state prevailed possibly with Jehu to continue them.

example of Jeroboam, God made him sensible of his displeasure; for he suffered the Syrians to make incursions into his kingdom, who ravaged the country from the river Jordan to the ocean, and ruined the countries of Gilead, Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. Jehu, having reigned twenty-eight years over Israel, died, and was buried in Samaria. During this reign, no doubt, there happened many remarkable transactions, which are lost\*.

While Jehu was executing the command of the Lord in Israel, Athaliah, the queen dowager of Judah, and mother to the late king Ahaziah, hearing that her son was slain, usurped the government of Judah, and, in revenge of the death of her father Ahab's family, murdered all the blood royal, that she might utterly extinguish the race of pious Jehoshaphat, and secure the kingdom to herself and her other† children. But by the good providence of God, Joash, an infant of a year old, escaped the effects of her rage; for his aunt Jehoshaba, the daughter of king Joram, and sister to the late king Ahaziah, concealed him and his nurse in an apartment of the house of the Lord, which she could more conveniently do, because she was the wife of Jehoida the high-priest.

Here, this young prince continued under the care of his aunt, unknown to Athaliah, for six years; and in the seventh year of his uncle Jehoida, having engaged the priests and Levites, and the leading men in all parts of the kingdom in the infant prince's interest, in a public assembly produced him, and made them take an oath of

\* *Lost.* For the rest of the acts and power of Jehu, we are referred to the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel, which cannot be either of the books now extant under that name; for very little mention is made of him in either of those books; nothing in comparison of what is said of him in the ninth and tenth chapters of the second book of Kings: whence we may conclude, that the book of Chronicles, to which we are here, and often elsewhere referred, is lost.

† *Other.* That Athaliah had other sons may be proved from 2 Chron. xxiv. 7.



fidelity to him. Then distributing the arms which had been consecrated by David, and kept ever since in the temple, he arranged the people with him into three bodies ; one to guard the king's person, and the other two to secure the gates, with a strict charge, that if any should attempt to break in upon them, they should be put to death. Things thus disposed, Jehoida brought out the young king, placed the crown on his head, and put the book of the law\* into his hand ; and having anointed him, they clapped their hands and shouted for joy, proclaiming him with sound of trumpet, and shouting " God " save the King."

The loud shouts and acclamations of the people soon reached the ears of Athaliah, who, in great haste repairing to the temple, to her great surprise saw the young king on the throne, and the people about him rejoicing ; upon which she rent her mantle, and exclaimed, " Treason ! " Treason !" But Jehoiada soon silenced her ; for he commanded the guards to seize and carry her out of the temple, and put to the sword all that should offer to rescue or assist her : the guards obeyed, and led her without opposition to the horse-gate, and slew her there.

Then Jehoida made a covenant between the Lord, the king and the people ; and also between the king and the people ; and going from hence to Baal's temple, they broke down the images, demolished the altars, pulled down the whole building, and slew Mattan, Baal's priest. Jehoida after this purged out several corruptions which in former reigns had been introduced into the temple ; and then he and all the officers and people conducted the king to the royal palace, and put him into possession of the kingdom of Judah.

Joash began his reign at seven years of age, in the seventh year of Jehu king of Israel, and reigned forty years. He was a just and religious prince so long as the good high-priest Jehoida lived, and restored the worship

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\* Law. This was according to the law, Deut. xvii. 18.



of the true God; but he did not destroy the altars that were in the high places.\* During his minority, Jehoida reformed the ecclesiastical state; and when he was grown to man's estate, he repaired the temple, which through the corruption of former times was very much decayed, and sacrilegiously stript by Athaliah and her children.

All things hitherto went on hopefully, and Jehoida's presence and advice kept the young king within the bounds of his duty. But the good old man being an hundred and thirty years of age paid the last debt to nature: and in consideration of his great services towards God and his house, in restoring the true worship, and settling the kingdom in the house of David, they buried him in the city of David among their kings.

And now the great men of Judah, who had lived in the idolatrous reigns, take the advantage of their king's youth,† and by their flattery, and other insinuations, prevail upon him to forsake the worship of the Lord, and to adore their idols. For this, the Lord, by several prophets, admonished the people of Judah, but they regarded them not: at last the Spirit of the Lord came upon Zachariah, the son of Jehoida the high-priest, who; for reproving them, was stoned to death in the porch of the temple, and at the command of the king; though the sacredness of the place; the dignity of his office, and his father's services, might very reasonably have stayed their wicked hands. But God soon required the innocent blood of Zachariah, both of the king and the people: for within a year after his death, Hazael king of Syria took Gath from the king of Judah with a small army; and

\* *High Places.* Where the people sacrificed and burnt incense; which, so long as they did it to the Lord, not to Baal or other idols, was winked at; though expressly contrary to God's command, Numb. xxxiii. 52, and commonly destructive to the people.

† *Youth.* Jehoiada the high-priest is supposed to have died in or near the twenty-third year of Joash's reign; so that Joash was about thirty years old when the princes of Judah seduced him to idolatry.

seizing the advantage of their surprise, marched directly to Jerusalem, where he put to the sword all the princes who had seduced their king to idolatry. So remarkable was the justice of God in punishing those princes, that they fell by the arms of an idolater; for such was Hazael king of Syria. Joash, greatly alarmed at the sudden arrival of Hazael, presented him with all the consecrated vessels and goods of the temple, which his ancestors and himself had devoted to the service of God, together with all the gold that was in the treasures of the temple and of his own palace, in order to induce him to leave Jerusalem.

The Syrian army was no sooner withdrawn, than God calls Joash himself to an account for his idolatry, and the murder of the pious Zachariah. He had before been very infirm in his health, and labouring under a complication of diseases, his servants Zabad and Jehozabad, conspired against him for the blood of the son of Jehoida the priest, and murdered him in his bed. Thus died Joash, after a reign of forty years; and being of royal extraction, they buried him in the city of David, but not in the royal sepulchre, because he had been an idolater.

Jehu dying in the twenty-third year of Joash king of Judah, his son Jehoahaz succeeded him; who imitating his predecessors in the political idolatry of the golden calves, to preserve the crown of Israel from being united to that of Judah, he provoked the Lord to afflict both him and his people, which he did by delivering them into the hands of Hazael the king of Syria, and afterwards into the hand of his son Benhadad. Yet when Jehoahaz returned to the Lord, he had compassion on him, and in due time sent them a deliverer; but this was not in the reign of Jehoahaz, but of his son Joash.\* Jehoahaz

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\* *Joash*. The synarchies or joint-reigns of father and son in those times (which were frequent) have rendered the chronology very difficult; as in this case: for Jehoahaz, in 2 Kings xiii. 1, is said to have reigned seventeen years; which cannot be according to what is said in the same verse, viz. That he began his reign in the twenty-third year of Joash king of Judah; for then he could reign but fourteen

was brought to so low\* a condition by the frequent invasions of the Syrians, that he had but fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers left. The many defeats he had received, and the oppression under which he laboured from the Syrians, so dispirited him, that grown weary of government and of life, he died, and was succeeded by his son Joash, a prince more successful, though not more religious, than his father.

Elisha had lived to see the completion of what he predicted to Hazael before he was king of Syria, which was literally fulfilled in the reign of Jehoahaz; and being now very old, and taken sick in the beginning of king Joash's reign, he receives a visit from him upon his sick bed. Young king Joash seeing him very weak, in tears lamented the approaching death of so great a prophet and so holy a man. The prophet observing this, and knowing that the Lord had determined to deliver Israel by this king from the oppression of the Syrians, by the allusion† of the bow and arrows, shewed him what success he was likely to obtain against his enemies. Joash encouraged with this favourable prediction, in three pitched battles, obtained victories over Benhadad, king of Syria, and recovered from him all the cities of Israel, which had been taken from them by Hazael, his father. During which transactions the prophet Elisha died, and after he had been some time buried, the divine power, by which he wrought so many miracles in his life time, gave a sacred approbation of his prophetic actions by a posthumous one; for a certain man being buried in Elisha's se-

at the most. To reconcile this then, we must suppose him to be taken into partnership in the government by his father two or three years before his death; which is very probable.

\* *Low*, &c. Now it was that the prophet Elisha had seen the fulfilling of that prediction, which he had given Hazael, concerning the cruelty and devastation he would exercise upon Israel, when he came to the crown of Syria.

† *Allusion*. See 2 Kings xiii. 15.

pulchre, the corps no sooner touched the bones of the prophet than he revived and stood upon his feet.

Joash, king of Judah, having received the reward of his ingratitude and cruelty from his two treacherous servants, his son Amaziah succeeded him, and for awhile walked in the ways of the Lord ; but he did not long persevere in this good course ; for following the example of his father, he suffered the high places to stand, and permitted the people to offer sacrifice and burn incense there. As soon as he was settled in the government, he took revenge of the two traitors who had murdered his father : then, having new officered and new modelled his army, upon a general muster he found he had three hundred thousand able men. But not thinking them strong enough, he added a hundred thousand hired troops of Israelites, and with these he intended to fall upon the Edomites, but was forbidden by a prophet, who advised him to discharge the Israelites ; which with great reluctance he did, and marched against the Edomites with his own people only, and attacking them in the valley of Salt he killed ten thousand upon the spot, and took ten thousand prisoners, whom he cruelly destroyed by precipitating them from the brow of a steep rock. But this victory was somewhat eclipsed by the Israelites, whom Amaziah had discharged ; for they, thinking themselves ill used in not being permitted to engage against the Edomites, in their return plundered all the towns in their way, killed three thousand men, and carried away much spoil. But the greatest misfortune of all was, that Amaziah brought home the Edomite gods with him, to which he paid adoration, and offered incense.

This so provoked the Lord, that, sending a prophet, he reproached him for his apostacy, and threatened to cut him off. Which prediction soon came to pass ; for Amaziah being somewhat elated with his late success against the Edomites, and thinking himself bound in honour to avenge the damage which the Israelitish army had done his towns, he sent a challenge to Joash, king of Israel, to meet him and fight a pitched battle. Joash despised this vain prince, and advised him to stay at home ; which so



provoked Amaziah, that he, without delay, drew out his forces, and marched to meet Joash; who was so well prepared to receive him, that he routed the army, took the king prisoner, and carried his victorious arms to Jerusalem; where he entered in triumph, broke down four hundred cubits length of the wall, plundered the temple and palace of all that was valuable, and taking hostages with him, he left the king of Judah to deplore his fate at Jerusalem, while he marches in triumph to Samaria. Amaziah lived fifteen years after this defeat; but there is nothing remarkable of him to be found, except that he was slain at Lachish by some inhabitants of Jerusalem, who had conspired against him; and being without any state or formality brought to Jerusalem, he was buried in the city of David.

Joash, king of Israel, was succeeded by his son Jeroboam, who came to the throne in the\* fifteenth year of Amaziah king of Judah. This king enjoyed a long reign, and was successful in many military achievements, to which he was encouraged by the prophet Jonah, whom God for that end sent to him; for taking pity on the distress of Israel, which had long been exposed to the incursions of their neighbours, and unwilling to let them be quite extirpated, under the conduct of this king Jeroboam, he restored them in part to their former condition. Jeroboam recovered the greatest part of the country his ancestors had lost, and restored the ancient boundaries of the kingdom of Israel from Hamath to the sea of the plain.

† The king of Israel having thus reduced his troublesome neighbours to a more peaceable temper, the pro-

\* *Fifteenth.* This is Josephus's calculation, which seems to be very just; for he reigned thirty years, fifteen of which he lived after the death of Joash king of Israel, who died in the fifteenth year of Amaziah.

† To some part of this king's reign, (viz. Jeroboam's) should be referred that action which we read in 1 Chron. v. 18, which was performed by the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, who mustering forty-four thousand seven hundred and sixty able men, and well skilled in war, made war upon the Hagarites;

phet Jonah,\* who† had encouraged and directed him in all his warlike undertakings, is by God commanded to another place. His commission‡ was expressly for Nineveh, whither he was to go and exhort the inhabitants to repentance; for the cry of their sins was come up before the Lord.

Nineveh was the metropolis of the Assyrian monarchy, and very ancient, being built soon after the flood by Nimrod, great grandson to Noah; (for so interpreters take the words in Gen. x. 11, which have some confirmation from Micah v. 6,) but being afterwards enlarged by Ninus, it took its name from him. It was a city of great extent, being fifty miles in compass. And how populous it was, may be gathered from its containing in it more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons, who knew not their right hand from their left, which must be understood of infants. It is therefore probable, that it contained at least six hundred thousand inhabitants. §

and being assisted by the Lord, to whom in the time of the battle they addressed themselves, they gave the Hagarites a very great defeat, and took a prodigious booty from them, consisting of fifty thousand camels, two hundred and fifty thousand sheep, two hundred thousand asses, and one hundred thousand prisoners, besides a great number that were slain in the action. Thus they prospered, because God engaged on their side; and these two tribes and a half having dispossessed the Hagarites, they dwelt in their places till the captivity.

\* *Jonaò.* He is called the son of Amittai, Jon. i. 1. This probably was the name of his father: but St. Jerome, in his prologue to this prophet's book, says, the Hebrews affirm that he was that son of the widow of Sarepta, whom the prophet Elijah raised from the dead, 1 Kings xiv. 17.

† *Who.* See 2 Kings xiv. 25.

‡ *Commission.* The reason of the Lord's sending a prophet to a heathen city, when prophets were wanting to correct and instruct his own people, was, that the heathens being converted by the mighty power of his word, and that in three days' preaching too, Israel might see how horribly they had provoked God's wrath, who had, by the diligent and constant preaching of his prophets for so many years, endeavoured to convert them.

§ This city stood on the banks of the Tigris. Modern travellers say, that its ruins are still visible on the eastern bank of the river, and nearly opposite the city

The sharp message which Jonah was here to deliver, (no less than the destruction\* of their city after the expiration of forty days) and the great power of the people, so terrified him, that forgetting the presence of God, who is every where, he thought to evade† this errand by going to some other place. Intending therefore to go to Tarshish, he went down to Joppa, a sea-port town, to seek his passage, where, finding a ship ready to sail, he paid the fare and went on board. But God soon convinced him of his disobedience; for when they were out at sea, a tremendous storm arose, which continuing, the seamen seeing their ship in danger of being lost, cried to their gods for help, and unloading the ship, found Jonah in the hold fast asleep. Then rousing him, they bade him call upon his God, that they might not all perish; but the storm increasing, they agreed to cast lots,‡ that they might know which was the guilty person, for whose sake this calamity befel them. The lot falling upon Jonah, they pressed him to tell them what he had done, who he was, and from whence he came. Jonah now plainly perceived that the justice of God had overtaken him. He candidly acknowledged who he was, and the crime of which he had been guilty, declaring that it was for his sake that the tempest was come upon them, and directing them to cast him into the sea as an effectual mean of

of Mozul or Mozil, which many confound with it. At the time when Jonah was sent to Nineveh, Phul is thought to have been the monarch, and in the days of his son Sardanapalus it was taken by Arbaces and Belisis, about the time of the foundation of Rome, A. C. 747. "It was taken a second time by Astyages and Nabopolassar, A. C. 626." After which it never recovered its former splendour.

\* *Destruction.* See Jon. iii. 4.

† *Evade.* Some interpreters suppose the reason of Jonah's disobedience to be, "That it was new and unusual for the prophets of the Lord to be taken from the elect people, and sent to the Gentiles."

‡ *Lots.* Which was wont to be done, when there was no hope that all could escape; for the heathens used to cast lots in cases of necessity.

averting the storm. The seamen, with much reluctance, and with earnest prayer to God that the guilt of innocent blood might not be laid to their charge, took him up, and cast him into the sea accordingly. This was no sooner done than the tempest subsided, and the sea became perfectly calm. The astonished seamen were now convinced of the reality of Jonah's guilt, and of the power of his God, and immediately offered a sacrifice to Him, and made vows.

Though God was pleased thus to punish Jonah's disobedience, yet in the midst of judgment remembering mercy, he had prepared a great fish\* to receive him, which swallowing him up, he continued in the belly of the fish three† days and three nights; after which

\* *Fish.* Infidels, in all ages, have made this passage of Scripture the subject of their ridicule, and have treated it either as a wild romance, or at most a parabolical representation of something else. They have pretended that the throat of a Whale, as this fish is generally supposed to have been, is insufficient to receive the body of a man, and that if received, human life could not have been supported for any length of time.

To remove the first difficulty, it has often been remarked, that in the book of Jonah it is not called a *Whale*, but "a great fish (Jonah i. 17.) which the Lord had prepared." It is indeed called a *Whale* in Matt. xii. 40, from the Septuagint, where the fish is named ΚΗΤΟΣ, a whale. Many learned men, knowing that whales are seldom seen in the Mediterranean Sea, where Jonah was cast away, and that the throat of most kinds of whales is so narrow as to be incapable of receiving a man, have concluded, that the fish in question, was not a whale but a *Shark*, for sharks are a species of fish common in that sea, and it is too well known capable of swallowing a man whole. The learned Bochart was of this opinion. See Bochart, vol. iii. 743. The authors of the Universal History, vol. x. p. 554, also observe that "The word here used (Matt. xii. 40,) signifies no more a whale than any other large fish that has fins; and there is one commonly known in the Mediterranean by the name of *Garcharias* or *Lamia*, of the bigness of a whale, but with such a large throat as to be able to swallow the largest man whole." See also Parkhurst on the word ΚΗΤΟΣ, who observes, that the fame of Jonah's preservation was so widely propagated as to reach even Greece; whence was derived

† *Three*, &c. In this respect Jonah was a striking type of our blessed Saviour, who for the same space of time was in the belly of the earth, the grave.



time, having prayed to the Lord, the fish vomited him out upon the dry land. Jonah being thus miraculously

the story of Hercules's escaping alive out of the fish's belly, as alluded to by *Lycophron*; who, speaking of Hercules, says,

————— Whom of old  
*Triton's carcharian dog with horrid jaws devour'd,*

That is, says Bochart, whom the *Canis Carcharias*, or *Shark* sent by Neptune, swallowed up.

But with all due deference to these learned men, it is, after all, not only *possible*, but *probable* also, that the fish by which Jonah was swallowed, was literally a *Whale*; for though it be true that the greater part of *Whales*, of which the *Greenland* kind is the most usual, have a swallow, not more than four inches broad, yet it is ascertained beyond a doubt, that there is another species of the whale, called the *Casbelot*, *Catodon*, or *Pett-fish*, from the huge head of which the unctuous substance called *spermaceti* is derived, whose throat is so very large, that he could swallow a whole ox. For this very important information, which throws more light on the subject than all the critics have done, we are indebted to a valuable book—Mr. Crantz's *History of Greenland*, vol. i. p. 112, &c. who describes this fish particularly, and mentions a case in which one of these whales having been struck with a harpoon; in his anguish threw up a whole shark which was twelve feet long; at the same time were found in his stomach fish bones two yards in length. Its under jaw has from thirty to fifty teeth about half a foot long, and as thick as a man's arm. It has a bunch on its back, and a fin behind each eye, near which it may be easily wounded, though its skin in general is very tough. One hundred barrels of blubber have been obtained from one of these whales. The head is disproportionally large, and is the principal magazine of the *spermaceti*. In the brain are twenty or thirty cavities in which this unctuous matter is found; but it circulates also through the other parts of the head and body of the fish by means of an artery or vessel as thick as one's leg. Many barrels of it are obtained from a single fish.

Mr. Crantz refers, for a larger account of this whale, to *Anderson*.

The establishment, therefore, of this fact, that the *Casbelot* is a whale capable of swallowing a man whole, will, we hope, forever silence the objections of future infidels.

Another difficulty that has puzzled many persons is, how it is possible for a man to live for two or three days in the stomach of a fish.

This difficulty is also removed by the following facts:

“1st. A very remarkable fish was taken on our own coast, though probably it was not of the full size, and therefore could not contain the body of a man;

delivered from his living prison, no more disputes the command of his God, but hastens away to Nineveh; and

but others of its species very well might. A print and curious description of it, by Mr. J. Ferguson, may be seen in the Philosophical Transactions, vol. liii. p. 170; from which even this small one appears to have been near five feet in length, and of great bulk; and to have merely, as it were, one vast bag, or great hollow tube, capable of containing the body of any animal, of size that was but in some small degree inferior to its own. Unquestionably, such a kind of fish, and of still larger dimensions, may, consistently even with the most correct ideas of any natural historian, be supposed to have occasionally appeared in the Mediterranean, as well as on our own coasts, where such a one was caught, having come up so far as the Bristol Channel and King's Road.

2dly, A man may continue in the water, in some instances, without being drowned. Derham tells us, (Physico Theology, book iv. cap. 7, note, p. 158, 159, 12mo.) that some have the *foramen ovale* of the heart remaining open all their lives, though, in most, it is closed very soon after birth; and that such persons as have the *foramen ovale* so left open, could neither be hanged nor drowned; because, when the lungs cease to play, the blood will nevertheless continue to circulate, just as it does in a foetus in the womb. Though Mr. Cheselden doubted of this fact; yet Mr. Cowper, the anatomist, says he often found the *foramen* open in adults: and gives some curious instances. Mr. Derham mentions several persons who were many hours and days under water, and yet recovered; and one who even retained the sense of hearing in that state. Dr. Plott (History of Staffordshire, p. 292.) mentions a person who survived and lived, after having been hanged at Oxford for the space of twenty hours, before she was cut down. The fact is notorious; and her pardon, reciting this circumstance, is extant on record. Ray, on the Creation, p. 230, observes, "That having the *foramen ovale* of the heart open, enables some animals to be amphibious." Where then is the absurdity in conceiving that Jonah might have been a person of this kind, having the *foramen ovale* of his heart continuing open from his birth to the end of his days? In which case he could not be drowned, either by being cast into the sea, or by being swallowed up by the fish.

3dly, Neither could Jonah be injured by the digesting fluid in the fish's stomach; for Mr. J. Hunter observes, "That no animal substance can be digested by the digesting fluid usually existing in animal stomachs, while life remains in such animal substances. Animals" says he, "or parts of animals, possessed of the living principle, when taken into the stomach, are not in the least affected by the powers of that viscus, so long as the living principle remains. Thence it is

being got a day's journey into the city, he, with a freedom and dignity becoming his character, proclaimed, *Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.* The people of Nineveh believing this message to be sent from God, proclaimed a fast, and putting on sackcloth, shewed such tokens of sorrow and repentance, that God reversed their doom. This displeased Jonah exceedingly; for, having positively denounced destruction to Nineveh, and fixed the time, he thought this clemency of God in sparing them would subject him to the censure of having been a false prophet, and accordingly.

that we find animals of various kinds living in the stomach, or even hatched or bred there; but the moment that any of these lose the living principle, they become subject to the digestive powers of the stomach. If it were possible for a man's hand, for example, to be introduced into the stomach of a living animal, and kept there for some considerable time, it would be found, that the dissolvent powers of the stomach could have no effect upon it; but if the same hand were separated from the body, and introduced into the same stomach, we should then find that the stomach would immediately act upon it. Indeed, if this were not the case, we should find that the stomach itself ought to have been made of indigestible materials; for if the living principle were not capable of preserving animal substances from undergoing that process, the stomach itself would be digested. But we find, on the contrary, that the stomach, which, at one instant, that is, while possessed of the living principle, was capable of resisting the digestive powers which it contained the next moment, viz. when deprived of the living principle, is itself capable of being digested, either by the digestive powers of other stomachs, or by the remains of that power which it had of digesting other things." (Philosophical Transactions, vol. lxii. p. 449.) Consistently with the observations of Mr. Hunter, we find that smaller fishes have been taken alive out of the stomachs of fishes of prey; and (not having been killed by any bite, or otherwise) have survived their being devoured, have swam away well recovered, and very little affected by the digesting fluid. Two instances of this kind are mentioned by Dr. Plott; (History of Staffordshire, p. 246.) and many others might be added.

There appears, therefore, nothing unphilosophical or absurd, in supposing that Jonah (or indeed any other man, having the *foramen ovale* of the heart open, or such a construction of his frame as those persons mentioned by Derham had) might be cast into the sea, and be swallowed up whole by a great fish, and yet be neither drowned, nor bitten, nor corrupted, nor digested, nor killed; and it will



he expostulates with God about it; who gently reproved him, asking him, whether he did well to be angry.

Jonah, however, in discontent, went out of the city, and building a booth, he sat under the shade of it, waiting to see what would be the fate of the city; seeming rather to desire the destruction of the place, than endure the least reflection on his prophetic office. But God gave him a rational conviction of his partiality to himself, and want of pity to the Ninevites; for he prepared a gourd,\* and made it shade him from the scorching beams of the sun which were troublesome to him. This

easily follow, from the dictates of common sense, that, in that case, the fish itself must either die, or be prompted by its feelings to get rid of its load; and this it perhaps might do more readily near the shore than in the midst of the waters; and in that case, such person would certainly recover again, by degrees, and escape. I acknowledge, there must have been a miraculous divine interposition in causing all the circumstances of the presence of the fish, of the formation of Jonah, and of the nearness of the shore at the time of his being thrown up, to concur rightly to effect his deliverance; and how much farther the miraculous interposition might extend, we cannot, nor ought, to presume to ascertain; but, solely to show the fact to be philosophically possible, even according to the experience we are permitted to be acquainted with, is sufficient to remove and fully to answer the objections of scoffers."

*See King's Morsels of Criticism.*

\* *Gourd.* That translations, by adhering too closely to the original, and likewise by going too far from it, have multiplied controversies, and given occasion to several foolish and superstitious fancies, and dangerous errors; we have here in this text of Jonah iv. 6, (amongst many others) a very remarkable instance. What this Gourd was, no one certainly knows. There are many conjectures about it, and it has afforded matter for much debate formerly, especially between the two fathers, St. Jerome and St. Augustine. St. Jerome translated the Hebrew word *Kikaion* by that of *Ivy*; but the Septuagint and vulgar Latin, which were St. Augustine's favourite versions, translated the one "a wild Gourd," the other a "Pumpkin" St. Jerome's freedom had like to have cost him dear, for St. Augustine attacked him violently in several letters, to which St. Jerome always answered very civilly, telling him he did not pretend to determine positively that it was an *Ivy*, but that it must have been some such plant, rather than a *Gourd* or a *Pumpkin*, which growing close to the earth could not have shaded Jonah from the



pleased Jonah ; but early the next morning God prepared a worm, which gnawed the gourd, and made it wither. Jonah having lost this defence from the heat of the sun, was so infested with its scorching heat, and the violent east wind, that he fainted, and in the extremity of pain he wished to die. Upon which God expostulated with Jonah thus : “ Thou hast had compassion on the gourd, for  
 “ which thou hast not laboured, neither didst thou make  
 “ it grow, and which came up in a night, and perished in  
 “ a night ; and should not I spare Nineveh, that great ci-  
 “ ty, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons  
 “ that cannot discern between their right hand and their  
 “ left ; and also much cattle ?”

Here the Book of Jonah ends ; but it gives no account of what became of the Ninevites, or of Jonah himself after this : though from God’s convicting him by the miracle of the gourd, and his compassionate expression

heat of the sun. But this was not all ; for St. Jerome complains that he was sent for to Rome, and there accused of sacrilege and heresy by St. Augustine’s friends, for changing the name of this plant from a Gourd to Ivy ; and that those who vindicated his version of this word were so shamefully used, that they were often forced to come to blows. Whatever name this plant should go by, no doubt it consisted of a spreading leaf ; whence some have taken it for a *wild Vine* ; others for a *Cucumber*, or a *Pumpkin* ; and perhaps, it might be the *Palmetta*. If any desire to be farther informed of this ridiculous controversy, they may consult Ribera on Jonah, Sixtus Senensis, Martinius, and Calvin’s Commentary on the Place.

It is certain that some plants in Egypt and in the east, grow with wonderful rapidity, and, as is generally the case with such plants, perish as quickly. *Volney*, in his Travels, vol. i. p. 71, speaking of the plant *El-kerra*, says, “ It is no doubt, this (salt) property of the air, and the earth (of Egypt) which added to the heat, gives vegetation an activity almost incredible in our cold climates. Wherever plants have water, the rapidity of their growth is prodigious.”

Yet, allowing for this vast rapidity of vegetation, we must admit, that as it is said concerning the fish, *The Lord prepared it*, so of the Gourd, it was He to whom all things are easy, that so suddenly raised the shadowy plant, and as suddenly caused it to wither. The plant itself was probably of rapid growth, and well calculated to form a shade, but its production in a single night must be ascribed to the divine agency.

concerning the Ninēvites, ch. iv. v. 11, it is likely he reversed their doom.

Though Nineveh was spared for a time, yet being taken by Arbaces in about sixty years afterwards, the people must, no doubt, have suffered by the war. The prophets Nahum and Zephaniah foretel its ruin in a very particular and pathetic manner : the exact method in which these predictions were accomplished, may be seen at large in Bishop Newton's Dissertation on the Prophecies.

The book of Jonah, though short, is full of instruction. We observe, with pain, the perverseness and peevishness of a good man ; for such he was, notwithstanding these imperfections ; but let us instead of judging him, examine and judge ourselves, and endeavour to avoid those tempers which we condemn in the prophet.

Let the severe punishment that God inflicted upon his servant, teach us the danger of disobedience, and that God is greatly displeased even with the sins of his own people. Yet, how encouraging is it to notice the condescending regard of God to the prayer of his penitent servant, and let no one despair of mercy, who seeks it, like him, though as it were " out of the belly of hell."

But the repentance of the inhabitants of Nineveh, as soon as Jonah delivered his message, is peculiarly observable ; especially as we find our Lord applying it to the Jews. " The men of Nineveh," said he, " shall rise in judgment against this generation, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, a greater than Jonah is here." Let us apply this to ourselves. How much greater are our advantages than those of Nineveh ! But are we humbled ? Do we believe the report of the gospel ? If not, how shall we escape ? But if we are enabled to repent of our sins, and seek mercy as offered to us through Jesus Christ, the readiness of God to turn away his threatened anger from Nineveh, may encourage us to hope that he will " multiply to pardon."

It ought also to be remarked, that our Saviour refers to the restoration of Jonah from the fish's belly, and makes it a sign, or type, of his own resurrection. The deliverance of Jonah was probably the means, in the hand of God, of convincing the Ninevites that his message deserved full credit; and it is by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, that he is "proved to be the Son of God with power;" it is the grand evidence of his mission, and we are "begotten again to a lively hope" by that most important fact.

Return we now to the affairs of Judah, whose last king was assassinated at Lachish by some conspirators of Jerusalem. His son, young Uzziah,\* at the age of sixteen years, is proclaimed king. He was a religious prince during the former part of his reign, maintaining the worship of the true God, for which the Lord blessed his arms with success. He defeated the Philistines in many battles, dismantled the cities of Gath, Jabneh and Azoth, and was so successful against the Arabs and the Ammonites, that he became terrible to his neighbours: and to secure and adorn his royal city, Jerusalem, he built towers on the walls of it, from whence, by engines, they could throw darts and stones on an approaching invader. He was a great admirer of husbandry, which he much improved, and thereby augmented his wealth. But the glory of all his kingdom was his army, which consisted of two thousand six hundred officers, and three hundred and seven thousand and five hundred soldiers, completely armed both for offence and defence. Thus successful in all things was this happy king, so long as the prophet Zechariah† lived, which was till the thirty-third year of

\* *Uzziah*. In 2 Kings xv. 1, he is called Azariah.

† *Zechariah*. He was not only a prophet, but preceptor to the king. St. Jerome says, this Zechariah was the son of that Zechariah the son of Jehoida, who was stoned by the command of king Joash, and born after his father's death. Helvicus will not allow the Zechariah, whom he mentions in the thirty-third year of Uzziah's reign, to be the same with the prophet Zechariah who wrote the prophecy under Darius; and with good reason.



his reign; but after his decease, the king was so elated with his greatness, that forgetting himself, he would needs go into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar. Azariah the priest seeing this, attended by eighty other priests, followed the king, and reminded him that it was not his office to burn incense, but theirs. The haughty king enraged to be thus reproved by his subjects, holding a censér in his hand, threatened them, and was just going to burn the incense; but in that instant, he was struck with a leprosy, and obliged to depart from the temple in a shameful manner: nor did he ever recover of this disease, but was forced to dwell apart by himself; and his son Jotham, as viceroy, took upon him the administration during his father's life. Uzziah having reigned fifty-two years,\* died, and was buried in the same field in which the royal sepulchres were, but at a distance from them.

While the affairs of Judah were in a flourishing condition, under that part of Uzziah's reign in which he served the Lord, the kingdom of Israel began to decline; † for Zechariah the son of Jeroboam, the fourth and last of the race of Jehu, who succeeded his father in the thirty-eighth year of Uzziah king of Judah, was at the end of six months murdered by Shallum, who usurped the Israelitish crown, which he possessed but one month; for Menahem going from Tirzah, ‡ slew Shallum, and

\* *Years, &c.* The prophecies containing but little historical matter in them, we shall only take notice of them in the reigns of those kings in whose time they prophesied.

† *Decline.* King Zechariah was the fourth from Jehu, and the last king of his race; in whom was fulfilled that gracious promise, which the Lord was pleased to make to Jehu, as a reward of his courage and zeal in executing the judgment which God had commanded him to do upon the house of Ahab, viz. That he and his family should sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation; which was about an hundred years; the last of the family being this king Zechariah the son of Jeroboam the second.

‡ *Tirzah.* Josephus says that this Menahem was at the siege of Tirzah by king Zechariah's order, where it is probable he might be general, because of making himself king upon the death of Shallum.



made himself king.\* Menahem, being settled on the throne, took the town of Tiphshah, which had refused to open its gates to him; for which he put the inhabitants to the sword, and was so barbarously cruel, that he ripped up all the women that were with child in the place; after which he plundered and laid waste all the country about it as far as Tirzah.

In these times was Israel torn with terrible convulsions; rapine, murder, and all manner of violence, and especially superstition and idolatry, reigning throughout the land; and though God often admonished, reprov'd and threatened them by his prophets, yet they continued impenitent; whereupon God permitted Phul,† king of Assyria to come and invade the land. Menahem understanding this, had the policy to make an advantage of this threatening storm; for presenting the Assyrian king with three thousand talents of silver, which he raised among his people, he not only persuaded Phul to withdraw his forces, but before he went, to confirm the possession of the crown to him. This answered his purpose, for he reigned quietly ten years, and was succeeded by his son Pekahiah, in the fiftieth year of Uzziah, king of Judah.

Pekahiah had not reigned more than two years, when Pekah, the general of his army, conspired against him, and having slain him in the tower of the palace royal, seized the crown, which he wore twenty years; though not with great quiet, for Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria, fell upon Ijon, Abelbethmaachah, Janoah, Kadesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, and all the land of Naphthali,

\* *King.* We are referred to the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, for an account of the rest of the acts of these three last kings, Zechariah, Shlull and Menahem; of which acts no mention is made in either of those books of Chronicles which we have. Which makes it still more evident, that that book, so often referred to, is lost.

† *Phul.* This Phul is by some taken to be that king of Nineveh, then the chief city of the Assyrian monarchy, who is said to have repented at the preaching of Jonah.

all subject to the crown of Israel, and carried the inhabitants captives to Assyria. Hoshea the son of Elah taking advantage of Pekah's confusion and distress by this ravage and pillage of his country, murders him, and assumes the throne; where, for a while, we will leave him and return to the affairs of Judah.

Jotham was five and twenty years old when he began to reign, though, as viceroy for some years before, the whole administration had passed through his hands. He had frequent war with his neighbours, particularly with Rezin king of Syria, and with Pekah king of Israel: he made war likewise with the Ammonites, whom he defeated, and obliged to pay him tribute. He was a just, powerful, and religious\* prince; and of a public spirit, for he built a gate to the temple, and raised many other structures for the service and strength of his kingdom. After sixteen years' reign he died, and was succeeded by his son Ahaz, a wicked prince, who degenerated from the piety of his father and grandfather, and so far exceeded the worst of his predecessors, that he not only walked in the steps of Jeroboam, who set up the worship of calves, but made molten images for all the inferior gods of the heathen. He sacrificed and burnt incense in the high-places, and on the hills, and under every green tree. He likewise burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, (a place not far from Jerusalem) and, to add to his other impieties, he made his son to pass through the fire, † according to the custom

\* *Religious.* Though the high-places remained during his time, 2 Kings xv, 35, yet the people who sacrificed there, sacrificed to Jehovah.

† *Fire.* Interpreters agree, that this passing through the fire was done either by causing the child to pass to Moloch between two fires, made near to each other for that purpose, by which the child was not killed, but consecrated to that idol; or by shutting up the child in the body of the idol, which was made of brass, in body like a man, but in head like an ox; in bulk so great, that the body was divided into seven distinct cells; into one of which the child to be sacrificed being put, was suffocated and burnt to death by the heat which was con-

of the heathen, whom God had cast out to make room for the children of Israel. But God soon called him to a strict account for these abominable sins, by permitting the kings\* of Syria and Israel to invade and ravage his

veyed from a fire without. And, that the shrieks of the children might not be heard, the priests beat drums; from whence the place was called Tophet, which signifies a drum.

The following extract from a modern writer, will serve to shew in what manner the passing *through*, or *over* fire, was anciently performed in India.

“ A still more astonishing instance of the superstition of the ancient Indians, in respect to their venerated fire, remains at this day, in the grand annual festival holden in honour of Darma Rajah, and called the FEAST OF FIRE; in which, as in the ancient rites of Moloch, the devotees walk *bare-foot over a glowing fire, extending forty feet*. It is called the feast of fire, because they then walk on that element.....When they come to the fire, they stir it, to animate its activity..... They walk over it either fast or slow, according to their zeal. *Some carry their children in their arms*, and others lances, sabres, and standards.

“ The most fervent devotees walk *several times over the fire*. After the ceremony the people press to collect some of the ashes to rub their foreheads with, and obtain from the devotees some of the flowers with which they were adorned, and which they carefully preserve.”

*Sonnerat's Travels*, vol. i. p. 154.

\* *Kings*, &c. As this story is related in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, there seems some disagreement, for in 2 Chron. xxviii. 5, &c. it is said, that God delivered Ahaz into the hand of the king of Syria; who smote him, and carried away a great multitude of prisoners to Damascus. And that he was delivered into the hand of Pekah, king of Israel, who slew in one day six score thousand men of Judah, and carried two hundred thousand women and children, with much spoil, to Samaria. And in 2 Kings xvi. 5, it is said, that Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem, and besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him. And Isaiah, chap. 7, ver. 1, &c. says the same as 2 Kings xvi. 5. To accommodate these several relations, we must suppose, that the account given in the book of Kings, and by the prophet Isaiah, related to one time, and that of Chronicles to another; or else, that the two kings of Syria and Israel, after they were forced to raise the siege of Jerusalem, committed those hostilities of killing so many men, and taking so many captives, in other parts of the kingdom. For there seems to be no ground for suspicion of any mistake of the transcriber in either place; the text agreeing in all three, only that in Isaiah and Chronicles is more particular than that in Kings.

country. These two kings, with their joint forces, laid seige to Jerusalem; which exceedingly alarmed Ahaz and his people: but the Lord sent the phophet Isaiah to him to comfort him, and to foretel the destruction of his enemies, and the establishment of himself and people, if they would believe in the Lord. For confirmation of this, the prophet desired Ahaz to ask a sign of the Lord; but the stubborn king refused, under a hypocritical pretence that he would not tempt God. This however was nothing but a distrust of his preservation.

The two kings having spent some time in the siege of Jerusalem, despairing of taking it, retired; but they committed most barbarous hostilities in other parts of the kingdom; for Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath, out of which he drove the Jews and settled the Edomites in it, and returned to Damascus with a great booty. Pekah, on his side, ravaged the country with an unlimited fury, putting a hundred and twenty thousand men of Judah to the sword, and carrying away two hundred thousand women and children captives. At the same time Zichri, a powerful man of Ephraim, slew Maasiah the king's son, together with Azrikam the great master of the king's household, and Elkanah, who was next in authority to the king. These barbarities provoked the Lord, who in pity to distressed Judah, sent the prophet Obed to reprove the cruel Israelites for the slaughter they had made, and the prisoners they had taken. Upon this the chiefs of the tribe of Ephraim opposed the bringing the captives and plunder into Samaria, alledging, that they had already sufficiently provoked the Lord, and ought not to make this addition. This so weighed with the army, that they quitted both the prisoners and the booty, and the princes of Israel clothing those who had been stripped, and supplying them with necessaries, sent them and the spoil to Jericho to their friends.

The Edomites having obtained possession of Elam, and the territories belonging to it, grew troublesome neighbours to Judah, which they infested with frequent incursions, as did the Philistines, who took several cities in the south parts of Judah. Under which afflictions, Ahaz, in-



stead of repenting, persisted in his idolatry, and sacrificed to the gods of Damascus, hoping for success from them, because he saw that the people flourished. But this, and his mistaken policy, in calling in a foreign aid, contributed to his ruin; for distrusting the providence of the Lord, he sent ambassadors to Tiglath-pileser,\* king of Assyria, with a present of silver and gold, to desire him to come and assist him, against the kings of Syria and Israel, offering to become tributary to him. The Assyrian king, glad of this opportunity, makes short work with the king of Syria, for coming with a large army against Damascus, he besieged and took† it, slew Rezin the Syrian king, and carried away the people captive. But before the Assyrian king left Damascus, Ahaz came to pay him a visit‡ there; where he increased his idolatry, by unhappily observing and admiring an idolatrous altar, with which he was so delighted, that he caused a model of it to be made, and sent it to Urijah the priest at Jerusalem, to make him such another against his return. Urijah pursued the king's directions, and when Ahaz came to Jerusalem he sacrificed on it, and became so strongly attached to this additional idolatry, that he introduced many alterations and innovations, removing to it part of the vessels which were in the temple, and at last shut the temple up: and to extinguish altogether the worship of the God of his fathers, he caused altars to be erected in

\* *Tiglath-pileser*. He is also called Tiglathpilneser. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 20.

† *Took*. This destruction of Damascus was not only foretold by Isaiah, chap. 7, but by the prophet Amos, chap. i. ver. 3, and also, chap. iii. ver. 12.

‡ *Visit*. This may be reasonably supposed to be done in policy, lest the victorious Assyrian should come to Jerusalem, after his success against Damascus, and take the advantage of the nakedness and weakness of Judah, which had been of late so often pillaged; and that what the king of Assyria did against the enemies of Judah, was not so much out of pity to them, as to enrich himself. For, as the text says, 2 Chron. xxviii. 20, "Tiglathpilneser troubled Ahaz, but did not strengthen him."

every corner of Jerusalem ; and in all the cities of Judah he made high-places to burn incense unto other gods. In the height of these impieties Ahaz died, having reigned sixteen years, and was buried in Jerusalem ; but not in the royal sepulchre of the kings of Judah.

Hoshea the son of Elah having murdered Pekah, king of Israel, and seized the crown, soon found his usurpation attended with many incumbrances. For, imitating his wicked predecessors, and the people continuing in disobedience and rebellion against the Lord, slighting the admonitions and threatenings of the prophets, the Lord, whom they so dishonoured, was greatly displeased, and therefore deserted them, permitting the king of Assyria\* to afflict them. For Hoshea was scarcely settled in his ill-gotten throne, when Salmanassar, the Assyrian monarch, invaded the land. Hoshea, for this time, pacified him with large presents, and a promise of becoming a tributary to him : but neglecting to pay the tribute-money, and intending to revolt by the assistance of the king of Egypt, Salmanassar, having early intelligence of his designs, marches with a vast army directly to Samaria, and laid siege to it ; which held out three years, but at last was obliged to yield, which was in the ninth and last year of Hoshea's reign. Salmanassar having taken the place, put Hoshea in irons, and confined him close, and carrying all Israel captives into Assyria, he placed them in Halah and in Habor, by the river Gozan, and in the cities of Media. Thus were ten tribes dispossessed of the land of Canaan, which God had given to their fathers, " because † they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded, and would not hear them, nor do them : " And of this calamity

\* *Assyria.* The king of Assyria is called in Isa. x. 5, " the rod of his anger."

† *Because.* See 2 Chron. xviii. 12, and more at large, 2 Kings xvii. from ver. 7 to v. 24, where the justice of God in disinheriting the Israelites, and the cause of it, are very amply set forth.

they had been often admonished, and their captivity foretold by the prophets.\*

Among the captive Israelites who were led away by Salmanassar, was Tobit,† a man of the tribe and city of Naphthali. He had served God from his infancy, and done many acts of charity. He married a wife of his own tribe, called Anna, by whom he had a son named Tobias, or Tobit, whom he brought up very piously. In their captivity this little family served God, and would not eat of the food of the heathen, but lived after the manner of the Jews. His piety was conspicuous to all, and so won upon the conqueror Salmanassar, that he made him his purveyor, and gave him leave to go wherever he pleased. Of this liberty he availed himself to visit and relieve his enslaved countrymen. He went one day to Rages, a city of the Medes, with ten talents of silver, which the king had bestowed on him, and finding Gabel, who was of his own tribe, very poor, he lent him the ten talents, and took a receipt. After the death of Salmanassar, Sennacherib persecuted the Israelites, yet Tobit did not cease to assist them; for he went daily to visit his kindred, and distributed among them what he

\* *Propbets.* Isaiah viii. 4, and ix. 9; to the end. Hosea viii. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and chap. xiii. 16. Amos iii. 9, to the end; chap. v. 2, 3, 5, and chap. 6, 7, and 7, 17, and Micah i. 5, 6, &c. chap. ii. 3, 4, &c

† *Tobit.* The Jews themselves consider the history of Tobit to be true, though they have not placed his book among their canonical books of Scripture. It is generally believed to have been written by the two Tobits; but of this there is no certainty. It is likely that the book was first written in Chaldaic, which was the language of the country where Tobit was a captive. St. Jerome translated it from the Chaldaic original, which is now lost; from which the Greek varies a little.

Whatever degree of authenticity may attach to the story of Tobit, which the Council of Trent has very precipitately, perhaps improperly, placed in the canon of Scripture; and though it includes various circumstances of a very strange, not to say romantic kind, it will, however, be found to afford excellent examples of piety, chastity, parental affection, and filial duty. It is on these grounds, and particularly in what relates to the young Tobias, that the history is here introduced.

had, to the utmost of his power; he fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and buried those that died, or had been killed. Sennacherib, after flying from the land of Judah, in consequence of a plague that God had sent among his soldiers, and retiring into his own country, he caused many of the Israelites to be slain, whose bodies Tobit buried. The king being informed of this, commanded him to be killed, and his goods to be seized. Tobit hearing this, fled, and having been a friend to many in distress, he did not now want a friend to conceal him. About six weeks after this, the king was murdered by his two sons; upon which Tobit returned to his house, and had all his goods restored to him. The danger he had been in, did not deter him from again burying the dead; and having one day very much fatigued himself in that charitable office, he lay down to sleep under a wall, and as he slept, there fell from a swallow's nest some hot dung into his eyes, and blinded him. This affliction he bore with much patience, during which he and his wife were reduced to such poverty, that she was forced to take in work to maintain them.

Tobit believing that he had not long to live, gave his son excellent instructions,\* and ordered him to go to Gabel at Rages, to recover the ten talents he had lent him, and return his receipt. Young Tobias was unwilling to undertake this journey alone; therefore his father bade him enquire for some civil person to bear him company, whom he would requite for his trouble. The angel Raphael appeared to Tobias in the form of a young Israelite, and offered to conduct him to his father's friend Gabel at Rages, at whose house he said he had been, calling himself Azariah the son of Ananias, and promised to carry out and bring back the young man in safety. As soon as they were gone, Tobias's mother wept, fearing she should never see her son again; but her husband, trusting in God, comforted her. Tobias being on his

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\* *Instructions.* See Tobit 4.



way, and coming to the river Tigris, went to wash his feet, and saw a great fish coming out of the water, which he feared would devour him ; but the angel encouraged him, advising him to lay hold of the fish and pull it upon the land : when he had so done, the angel directed him to take the entrails of it, and to keep the heart, the gall and the liver, assigning for a reason, that the liver and the heart being burnt on the coals, the smoke of them would drive away evil spirits, and that the gall was proper for curing of blemishes in the eyes. Then they dressed some of the fish, and salted up the rest to serve them till they came to their journey's end.

Being come near Ecbatan, a city of Media, the angel told Tobias that there was a man in that city called Raguel, who was of the same tribe, and his near kinsman ; that he should go and lodge at his house, and ask his daughter in marriage, and by that means he would obtain possession of his whole property. Tobias said, that he was informed she had been married already to seven husbands, who were all dead, and that the evil spirit had killed them ; that he feared the same fate would befall him, and being an only son, his death would cause so great affliction and grief to his parents, that it would hasten their death. The angel answered, that the persons over whom the evil spirit had possessed power, were such as had married without the fear of God, and only with a view to gratify, like the beasts, their sensual desires ; that to prevent the misfortune that had befallen the others, when he married the young woman, he should strictly observe continence for the first three days, wholly devoting himself and his wife to prayer. That the first night he should lay the liver of the fish on the fire, and it would drive away the evil spirit ; and when the third night was passed, he should take the young woman, in the fear of the Lord.

Tobias being arrived at Raguel's house, was received with much joy and respect, which encouraged the young man to demand his daughter in marriage. Raguel at first felt some difficulty to give her, fearing that the same fate might attend him, which had happened to the seven who

had already married her ; but the angel bidding him not fear, he immediately gave her to him. Tobias punctually performed the angel's injunctions. He roasted the liver of the fish on the coals, and spent three nights in continence and prayer. Raguel, who expected the death of this his eighth son-in-law, was surprised and delighted to see him alive and well in the morning ; and as a testimony of his joy made a feast, and conjured his son Tobias to stay with him a fortnight. In which time, that he might not neglect his father's affairs, he entreated the angel, whom he still took to be Azariah, to go to Rages, to receive the money of Gabel, which he owed to his father. The angel obeyed, went and received the money, told Gabel what had happened to young Tobias, and conducted him to the wedding.

In the mean time, the parents of Tobias were in great pain for their son. The mother was inconsolable, but the father still had hopes. And now, Tobias, considering his parents' uneasiness at his long absence, took leave of his father-in-law, and set out with the angel, his wife, men and women servants, cattle and camels, which carried a considerable sum of money. They arrived in eleven days at Charan, which is not far from Nineveh. The angel and Tobias set out before his wife ; and the dog that had gone with them ran home before them. By this the good old parents knew their son was not far off, and went out to meet him. After embraces and mutual salutations Tobias rubbing his father's eyes with the fish's gall, a sort of white film dropped from them, and the old man recovered his sight. Sarah, Tobias's wife, and all their family came seven days after ; and being now all met, there was great feasting and rejoicing for a whole week ; after which Tobias designing to reward Azariah, offered him half of all that he had brought home from his journey. Upon which he, whom they took for Azariah, declared he was the angel Raphael, and vanished.

Tobit lived to be an hundred and fifty-eight years old. Before his death he foretold the approaching destruction of Nineveh, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. He advised his son to depart from Nineveh with his seven chil-

dren, as soon as his mother was dead. The son obeyed him, and immediately after the decease of his mother, taking his wife, children, and grand-children, he left Nineveh, and returned to his father and mother-in-law, whom he found still living in a good old age. Upon Raguél's death he inherited all that he had, and, having lived a hundred and twenty-seven years, died in the fear of the Lord.

The wretched Israelites being forced out of their own country, the Assyrian king drew several colonies of his own people from Babylon, and other provinces, and sent them into Canaan,\* where they took possession of the cities, and dwelt in them; but polluting the Holy Land with various idolatries, the Lord sent lions† among them, which slew many of them. The people attributing this affliction to their not worshipping the god of the country in the manner which had been established, dispatched messengers to the king of Assyria, to inform him that the god of the land had sent lions among them, because they, not knowing how that god would be served, had performed no worship to him. Upon this the king ordered one of the priests who had been brought captive out of the land of Israel, to be carried back thither, to instruct the new inhabitants in the worship of the god of the land. Accordingly, one of the captive priests was sent, who settled in Bethel, and taught the people how they should fear‡ Jehovah. But these colonies, consist-

\* *Canaan.* This re-peopling of Samaria, and other cities of Israel, is ascribed to Esarhaddon, Ezra iv. 2, but he being the grandson of Salmanassar, by whom the country was depopulated, it may be considered, whether it be probable, that the country lay waste and uninhabited so many years, as were between the grandfather and grandson; and whether they, who were sent by Esarhaddon, might not, probably, be a second colony.

† *Lions.* See 2 Kings xvii. 25.

‡ *Fear.* That is, how they should worship the calf, as the degenerated Israelites had done.

ing of a mixture of people of several nations and provinces, each made a god of their own, according to the manner of the place from whence they came, and put them in the houses of the high-places, which the Israelites\* had made. Thus was introduced among them, a confused mixture of the worship of the true God and of false Deities, they at the same time serving Jehovah and their own idols, the last of which were numerous and various, according to the customs of the countries from whence they came. They that came from Babylon set up Succothbenoth† for their god. They that came from Chuthath made Nergal‡ their god. The men of Hamath set up Ashima.§ The Avites had two gods, Nibbaz|| and Tartak.¶ They that came from Sepharvaim had two, Adramelech\*\* and Anammelech.††

Though this captivity, and the afflictions that attended it, were a literal completion of what the prophets had predicted would inevitably befall the Israelites for their disobedience; yet were they so far from being reclaimed, that they still persisted in their wicked course of idolatry,

\* *Israelites.* 2 Kings xvii. 29, they are called Samaritans, because Samaria was the metropolis, or chief city of that kingdom.

† *Succothbenoth* was the picture of a hen with her chickens. Godwyn Mos. and Aar. l. 4, c. 7.

‡ *Nergal.* The Hebrew doctors call this the *Gallus Sylvestris*, others a *Woodcock*, but D'Assigny, l. 1, p. 103, says, Nergal was a continual fire.

§ *Ashima* was represented by a goat. Godwyn, *ut supra*.

|| *Nibbaz.* Supposed to be the same with Anubis, which the Egyptians worshipped in the image of a dog.

¶ *Tartak.* Worshipped in the form of an ass.

\*\* *Adramelech.* Represented in the form of a mule.

†† *Anammelech.* In the form of a horse. But because the Sepharvites, 2 Kings xvii. 31, are said to burn their children in the fire to these gods, some have thence conjectured, that these two idols were the same with Moloch.



and neglected the statutes and laws, which the Lord had given to their forefathers. This was the end of the Israelitish kingdom, and the beginning of that mongrel people, which were afterwards called Samaritans; enemies to the Jews, and, as such, despised by them.

The kingdom of Israel being thus extinguished, that of Judah had a longer period, continuing about a hundred and forty years after the captivity of Israel. Good Hezekiah, succeeding his wicked father Ahaz, began his reign in the third year of Hoshea, and in the twenty-sixth year of his own age. God blessed him with twenty-nine years' reign of plenty and prosperity. He was a religious prince, and permitted no other worship throughout his dominions than that of the true God, as it had been appointed by the law. The very first month of the first year of his reign, he caused the gates of the temple, which his father had shut up, to be opened, and the fabric to be repaired. Then, directing the priests and Levites to sanctify themselves, he caused them to cleanse it, and put all things in order. When the temple was cleansed, the king, having collected all the vessels and utensils that could be found there, caused them to be cleansed, and placed before the altar of the Lord. Hezekiah having thus prepared all things for the worship of God, went early in the morning to the temple, attended with his chief officers; where he offered burnt-offerings and sacrifices in such abundance, that the priests were too few to slay them, and were forced to accept of the help of the Levites, who (so great was the corruption then in the priesthood) were more ready to sanctify themselves than the priests. Thus was the service of the house of the Lord revived and set in order, to the mutual joy and satisfaction both of king and people. And now a way being opened for a thorough reformation, the king proposed the reviving of the passover; which, by reason of the division of the kingdom, and the frequent commotions that had happened thereupon, had not been regularly observed for a long time. Consulting therefore with his princes, it was agreed, that since it could not be kept in the first month, (the usual time,) because there

was not a sufficient number of priests sanctified, and the people could not have timely notice to assemble at Jerusalem, it should be kept in the second month; and proclamation was ordered to be made from Dan to Beer-sheba, to invite not only the two tribes of the kingdom of Judah, but all those of the ten tribes of Israel, who had escaped the captivity. Accordingly letters were sent by post from the king, throughout all Israel and Judah. But when the messengers came to the countries of Ephraim, Manasseh and Zebulun, they were derided and uncivilly used. However, several of the tribes of Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun, gladly embraced the opportunity of worshipping the Lord in the true way, and came to Jerusalem. As for the men of Judah, the power of God wrought so effectually upon them, that they unanimously obeyed the king and his princes, who, they were sensible, acted by the command of the Lord.

All things being prepared, and the idolatrous altars in Jerusalem demolished, and thrown into the brook Kidron, the people met, and on the fourteenth day of the second month, celebrated the passover. But good king Hezekiah, fearing that in so great a multitude there might be some who had not observed the appointed ceremony of sanctifying themselves, offered this prayer\* in their behalf; "The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, even the Lord God of his fathers, although he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary." The passover being ended, the king commanded all that were present to go into all the cities of Judah, and break down the images, burn the groves, and demolish the high-places and altars, not only in Judah, but in all parts of Benjamin, and in those places of Ephraim and Manasseh, which were subject to Judah. In fine, he restored the ancient worship which had been

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\* *Prayer.* See 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19, in which chapter is set down the rest of this great solemnity, the greatest that had been performed in Jerusalem, since the time of Solomon.

used in the temple, in all its solemnities; allotting to the priests and Levites their respective services, and allowances of provisions and other necessaries. And to perfect the reformation in point of religion, he broke in pieces the brazen serpent which Moses had made, because the people had offered sacrifice to it till that time.\*

Hezekiah, continuing stedfast in the worship of the Lord, his piety was rewarded with a prosperous reign; and he merited the title of the best king of Judah before† or after his time. He recovered those cities which the Philistines had taken from his father in the low-country, and south parts of Judea; and being uneasy under the tribute which his father had engaged to pay to the king of Assyria, he refused to pay it any longer. Upon this, Sennacherib enters Judah in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign, and besieging several cities, took them. Which Hezekiah hearing, and rightly conjecturing that he would at last bend his whole force against Jerusalem, resolved, while he had time, to make it as strong as he could: and to supply himself, and straiten the enemy, he stopped up all the springs without the city, and turned the brook Gihon into the city. Then he repaired the wall;‡ made several new fortifications; and added another wall without the old one. He likewise repaired the citadel Millo, and provided the city with all kinds of warlike ammunition.

Notwithstanding these preparations, Hezekiah, wisely considering his inferiority of power, thought it safer to submit and compound the matter, than to run the hazard of a battle, and suffer his country to be ravaged and plundered by the enemy. To which end, he sent ambassadors to Sennacherib, who then was before Lachish,

\* *Time.* This serpent was, no doubt, preserved as a memorial of the divine goodness; but when the people became so superstitious as to pay divine honors to it, Hezekiah called it *Nebushtan*, (a piece of brass) intimating, that no worship was due to it; and to prevent further abuse, wisely destroyed it.

† *Before.* That must be meant, since the division of the kingdom.

‡ *Wall.* This was that part of the wall which Joash, king of Israel, had broken down in the time of Amaziah, king of Judah, 3 Chron. xxv. 23.



and by them acknowledging his offence, entreated him to withdraw his army, promising to submit to what terms he pleased. The haughty Assyrian monarch demands thirty talents of gold,\* and three hundred talents of silver; † which Hezekiah with much difficulty, raised; for in order to do it, he was forced to strip the temple and his own palace. The base Sennacherib, having received the money, refuses to stand to the agreement; and, instead of raising the siege, or withdrawing his army, sent away a large detachment under the command of three generals, Tartan, Rabsaris, and Rabshekeh, to take possession of Jerusalem; where Rabshekeh, in the name of his master, and in great contempt of the God of Israel and king Hezekiah, demanded the surrender of the city. Hezekiah had sent three of his ministers to parley with the three Assyrian generals, viz. Eliakim, comptroller of his household; Shebna, the secretary, and Joab, the recorder. To these Rabshekeh, addressed himself in a most insolent manner, in the Jewish language, which he continued to repeat, that the people, hearing his proud threats, and vain boastings, might be intimidated, and induce the king to yield to their insolent demands. The three ministers return to Hezekiah in a very mournful manner, and relate to him what had passed between the Assyrian commanders and themselves; upon which, the king sent Eliakim and Shebna to Isaiah, to desire him to consult the Lord for them, who, not in the least dismayed at the arrogance of the blasphemous king of Assyria, returned this short and comfortable answer ‡ to the king of Judah; “ Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servant of the king of Assyria hath blasphemed me. Behold I will send a blast

\* *Thirty*, &c. At four thousand five hundred pounds each, thirty talents of gold amount to one hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds.

† *Three*, &c. Three hundred talents of silver, at three hundred and seventy-five pounds each, amount to one hundred twelve thousand and five hundred pounds. In all, two hundred and forty-seven thousand, five hundred pounds: a prodigious sum in those days.

‡ *Answer*. See Isa, xxxvii. 6, 7, &c.



“ upon him ; and he shall hear a rumour, and shall re-  
 “ turn to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the  
 “ sword in his own land.”

Rabshekeh having summoned Jerusalem to yield, and receiving no answer, returned to his master, who was encamped before Libnah. Here it was that Sennacherib heard the rumour, which God threatened by Isaiah ; which was, that his country was invaded by Tirhakah king of Ethiopia. In consequence of this intelligence, he resolved to return home with all speed ; but before he departed, he sent a second summons to Hezekiah, as blasphemous and as insolent as the former. Hezekiah having read the letter, went into the temple, and spreading it before the Lord, he prayed to him for deliverance from the haughty king of Assyria. Hezekiah had no sooner offered this prayer than the Lord returned him an answer\* by the prophet Isaiah, containing an assurance of speedy deliverance ; and telling him that the king of Assyria should not attack Jerusalem, but return without doing any injury. This was soon verified ; for in that same night the angel of the Lord came into the camp of Sennacherib, and slew† a hundred and eighty-five thousand,

\* *Answer.* See 2 Kings xix. 20.

† *Slew.* What manner of death these men died is not mentioned in the text, so that there is room for a variety of conjectures. Though most agree that it was a sort of suffocation, perhaps occasioned by lightning.

“ Mr. Boswell, in his life of Dr. JOHNSON, informs us, that it was a subject of conversation between them, in what manner so great a multitude of Sennacherib’s army was destroyed. ‘ We are not to suppose,’ says the doctor, in reply, ‘ that the angel went about with a sword in his hand, stabbing them one by one, but that some powerful natural agent was employed ; most probably, the Samyel.’ Whether the doctor had noticed some picture in which the angel was thus employed, is uncertain ; but it should seem, that this idea is current ; and even Dr. DONDRIDGE appears to have conceived of the angel, as of a person employed in slaughter ; for he says, on the passage where our Lord mentions that his Father could furnish him twelve legions of angels : ‘ How dreadfully irresistible would such an

who were all choice men. Sennacherib,\* the next day, seeing such a slaughter of his people, hastened with the remainder of his army into his own country, and took up his residence at Nineveh; where he had not long been, when, as he was worshipping in the temple of Nisroch,† his god, his two unnatural sons, Adrammelech and Sharezar, assassinated‡ him; who escaping into Armenia, made way for Esarhaddon, their brother, to ascend the Assyrian throne.

After this defeat of Sennacherib, Hezekiah was highly respected by all the neighbouring princes, several send-

*army of angels* have been, when *one* of these celestial spirits was able to destroy 185,000 Assyrians at one stroke!"

The *Samyel*, or *Simoom*, referred to by Dr. Johnson, appears from Mr. Bruce's Travels, and from other writers, to consist of a meteor, "appearing like a thin smoke, and passing with a gentle ruffling wind. It is peculiarly fatal to persons sleeping. It is felt, and is compared to a suffocating fire. Its extent is sometimes considerable; and it often happens in the night." From this description, and from the expression used in Isa. xxxvii. 7, "Behold I will send a *blast* upon him" (Sennacherib,) it appears rather probable, that the Symoom was the agent which God employed in the destruction of this immense number of men.

· See more on this subject, in *Fragments*, No. iv. p. 10.

\* *Sennacherib*. He being the principal offender in this case, and his people but as subjects obeying him, it may be asked why he escaped in this great slaughter? To which interpreters answer, 1. That he might be sensible of that great power which he had so insolently blasphemed. And, 2. That after he had seen the slaughter of his people, and shamefully fled, he might die a more scandalous and ignominious death, by the hands of his unnatural sons.

† *Nisroch*. Some take this god to be the figure of Noah's ark, others of an Eagle. The seventy call him Mesrach; Josephus calls him Araskes. The Hebrew of Tobit published by Munster, calls him Dagon.

‡ *Assassinated*. The cause of this parricide is not mentioned in the sacred text. But Dr. Prideaux, in his Introduction to the Reading of History, p. 154, gives this plausible account. When Sennacherib reached home, with the loss of so great an army, he demanded of some about him, what the reason might be, that the irresistible God of heaven so favoured the Jewish nation? To which he was answered, That Abraham, from whom they were descended, by sacrificing his only son to him, had purchased this protection to his progeny. Whereupon the king replied, "If that will win him, I will spare him two of my sons, to gain him to my side." Which, when his two sons, Sharezar and Adrammelech

ing him presents; so that he became exceedingly rich and powerful. In the midst of all which he was seized by a mortal disease, and to assure him it was so, the prophet Isaiah, in the name of the Lord, came to advise him to settle his affairs, for he should die; and then withdrew. Hezekiah knew no other way to deprecate this sentence, than by applying directly to his God, whom he thus addressed: "Remember me, O Lord, I beseech thee; how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart; and have done that which is good in thy sight."\* This short prayer was so prevalent with God, that before Isaiah had got into the middle of the court, the Spirit of the Lord bade him return and tell Hezekiah that he had heard his prayers and seen his tears; that he should recover in three days, and that he would add fifteen years to his life; giving him at the same time an assurance of his care and protection of him and his people. Hezekiah, in surprise at the sudden reverse of his doom, asked the prophet by what sign he might know he should recover. Isaiah informed him, that he might take his choice; either to have the shadow on the sun-dial go ten degrees forward or backward; and he chose the latter, which accordingly came to pass. Then the prophet ordered a lump of dry figs to be laid upon the king's ulcer, and he recovered.

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heard, they resolved to prevent their own death by his. To these times may be referred those prophecies of Isaiah which are contained in ch. x. and in ch. xiv. 25, and ch. xxxi. 8, and that of Micah, ch. iii. 6.

\* *Sight.* The fear of death which seems to have prevailed in good Hezekiah may appear, at first sight, surprising: but we are to remember that in the Old Testament days, "life and immortality" were not so fully revealed as in these gospel times; and, even now, if Christians are not favoured with a lively view of eternal happiness, and their own title to it, through the righteousness of Christ, we are not to wonder, if, for a time, they shrink from the approach of dissolution. But the interest of the nation which he governed, and which seemed to be so much connected with his continuance on the throne, may well account for the earnestness of his desire to live. We may add, that his son and successor, Manasseh, was not then born.

Immediately after his recovery, he drew up a pathetic memorial of his affliction upon the expectation of his death, and a grateful acknowledgment of his recovery ; which he committed to writing.\* The fame of this cure, and the miracle attending it, spread so far, that it reached the ear of Morodach Baladan, king of Babylon,† who sent ambassadors with letters and presents to congratulate him on his recovery. Hezekiah, thinking he could not more honourably return the compliment, than by shewing them the grandeur of his kingdom, very indiscreetly‡ gave them a view of all his strength and treasure. For which Isaiah, by the order of God, reprovèd§ him severely, and foretold, that the day would come, when all the treasures he had gathered, and his children also, should be carried into Babylon. Hezekiah having erred through human weakness, not stubbornness, humbly bowing to the judgment, replied, “ Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken, seeing there shall be peace and truth in my days.”

From this time to the end of his reign, he continued steadfast in the practice of righteousness, increasing in power, riches, and honour. All his undertakings for the

\* *Writing.* See Isa. xxxviii. 9, &c.

† *Babylon.* At that time Babylon was tributary to the Assyrian monarchy, and though Morodach Baladan is called king, he is thought to have been no more than viceroy.

‡ *Indiscreetly.* Such actions have cost nations dear; and have been often the occasion of drawing the barbarous people into the Roman empire.

§ *Reprovèd him.* The sacred historian informs us, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31, that, in this particular instance, “ God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.” It is probable that Hezekiah, though a pious man, knew not that there was so much pride and vanity in his heart as this interview with the ambassadors discovered. “ His heart was lifted up”—the distinguishing favours conferred upon him had produced an undue conceit of his own importance, and he had perhaps an unjustifiable dependance on his wealth and arms, which he ostentatiously displayed to these foreigners, that they might conceive more highly of him. But God reprovèd him by his prophet, and no doubt, he became more humble and diffident.



public welfare prospered. He replenished his stores, victualled his camps, fortified his city, and succeeded in all his enterprises. At length, however, he "slept with his fathers," and, the people, sensible of the blessings they derived from his government, paid him unusual honours at his funeral; for "they buried him in the *chiefest* " of the sepulchres of the sons of David: and all Judah, "and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his " death."\*

The burial place called the sepulchres of the kings of the house of David was a very sumptuous, and stately building. It lies now without the walls of Jerusalem, but as it is supposed, was formerly† within them before that city was destroyed by the Romans. It consists of a large court of about 120 feet square, with a gallery or cloister on the left hand, which court and gallery with the pillars that supported it were cut out of the solid marble rock. At the end of the gallery there is a narrow passage or hole, through which there is an entrance into a large room or hall of about twenty-four feet square, within which are several lesser rooms one within another with stone-doors opening into them, all which rooms, with the great room were all likewise cut out of the solid marble rock. In the sides of those lesser rooms are several niches, in which the corpses of the deceased

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\* In Hezekiah's reign we read of two great ministers, Eliakim and Shebna, who were sent to receive the king of Assyria's message by Rabshekeh, and afterwards to consult the prophet Isaiah about it, 2 Kings xviii. 17, 18, and ch. xix. 2. Eliakim was a good man; but Shebna a wicked man. The prophet Isaiah, chap xxii. was sent by the Lord to Shebna to reprove him, and tell him, that he would not only throw him out of his offices, and place Eliakim in them but send him away captive, and would "violently turn and toss him, like a ball, into a large country, where he should die:" and he would give his office to Eliakim, (whom he had supplanted, and gotten him from the office of treasurer) and would make Eliakim father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

† Formerly. Maimonides in his tract Beth Habbechirah, c. vii. saith, in Jerusalem they do not allow a sepulchre, except the sepulchres of the house of David, and the sepulchre of Huldah the prophetess, which were there from the days of the former prophets. This proves these sepulchres to have been within the walls of Jerusalem, and that the words of Scripture, which place them in the city of David, are strictly to be understood.

kings were deposited in stone coffins. In the innermost or chiefest of these rooms was the body of Hezekiah laid in a nich, probably, cut on purpose at that time for it, in the upper end of that room, to do him the greater honour. And all this remains entire even to this day. It seems to have been the work of king Solomon, for it could not have been made without vast expence, and it is the only true remainder of old Jerusalem, which is now to be seen in that place.

Hezekiah was immediately succeeded by his son Manasseh, who, at the time of his accession to the throne, was only twelve years of age. Though he was but a boy, he could not be unacquainted with the pious character and happy reign of his parent, whose example, however, he was so far from imitating, that he acted directly contrary to him in all things, especially in what related to the worship of God; for he adored idols, restored the high-places, erected altars to Baal, placed an idol in the temple, made his son pass through the fire, and made use of diviners, enchanters, and those who said they had familiar spirits. He was naturally very cruel; for, to add to the rest of his crimes, he is said to have shed so much innocent\* blood, that Jerusalem was filled with it. By these horrid impieties he provoked the Lord to send his prophet to him with this dreadful message; that he would bring such calamities upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever should hear of them, they should make their ears to tingle: declaring that he would forsake the remnant of his inheritance, and deliver them into the hands of their enemies. These judgments soon came to pass; for God permitted the Assyrians to enter Judah, who committed all manner of outrage, and seizing the guilty king, who hid himself among the briars, put him in irons, and, with his people, carried him prisoner to Babylon.

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\* *Innocent.* Amongst the rest that composed this purple stream, it is more than probable, that the innocent blood of the prophet Isaiah was spilt. For though the Text gives no account of his death, yet Ecclesiastical Writers tell us, that under this king Manasseh (who is reported to have been his son-in-law) he was, in his extreme age, after he had lived more than a hundred years, and prophesied more

Manasseh, in this distress, came to himself; and considering that the hand of God was upon him for his abominable practices, he, in most pungent sorrow, and in a deep sense of his crimes, addressed himself to God, who graciously heard his prayers, and restored him to his kingdom. Upon his return, to manifest the sincerity of his repentance, he removed the idols and altars of strange gods out of the temple, and suffered none of them to remain in Jerusalem. Then repairing the altar of the Lord, he sacrificed thereon burnt-offerings, and thank-offerings, and obliged the people of Judah to serve the Lord. However, the people still sacrificed in the high-places, not to idols but to the Lord their God only. And as he reformed the abuses in religion, so he did those of the state; for he garrisoned his towns, and built a very high wall, to inclose mount Sion in the city. Having reigned fifty-five years, he died, and was buried (not as the good kings of Judah, in the royal sepulchre) but in the garden\* of his own house, called the garden of Uzziah.

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than sixty of them, most barbarously put to death, by being sawed in two with a wooden saw. To which, very probably, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews referred, when he said, "They were sawed asunder." Heb. xi. 37. He collected into one volume all the prophecies he made under the kings, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

\* *Garden.* See 2 Kings xxi. 18, though his reign was the longest of any of the kings of Judah or Israel, and though his captivity was in a few years after his accession to the crown, yet we have very little said of him in the Holy Scriptures after his restoration: but we are referred to the book of the *Seers* for the former part of his reign. Who these *Seers* were, is not certainly known. In our margin they are called *Hozai*, which the Jews conclude to be the prophet Hosea, which cannot be. The Septuagint translate the word *Hozai* by that of *Seers*, making it not a proper, but common name; from which Vatablus rightly calls them prophets; for so was Samuel called, when Saul went to enquire of him.

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1691  

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